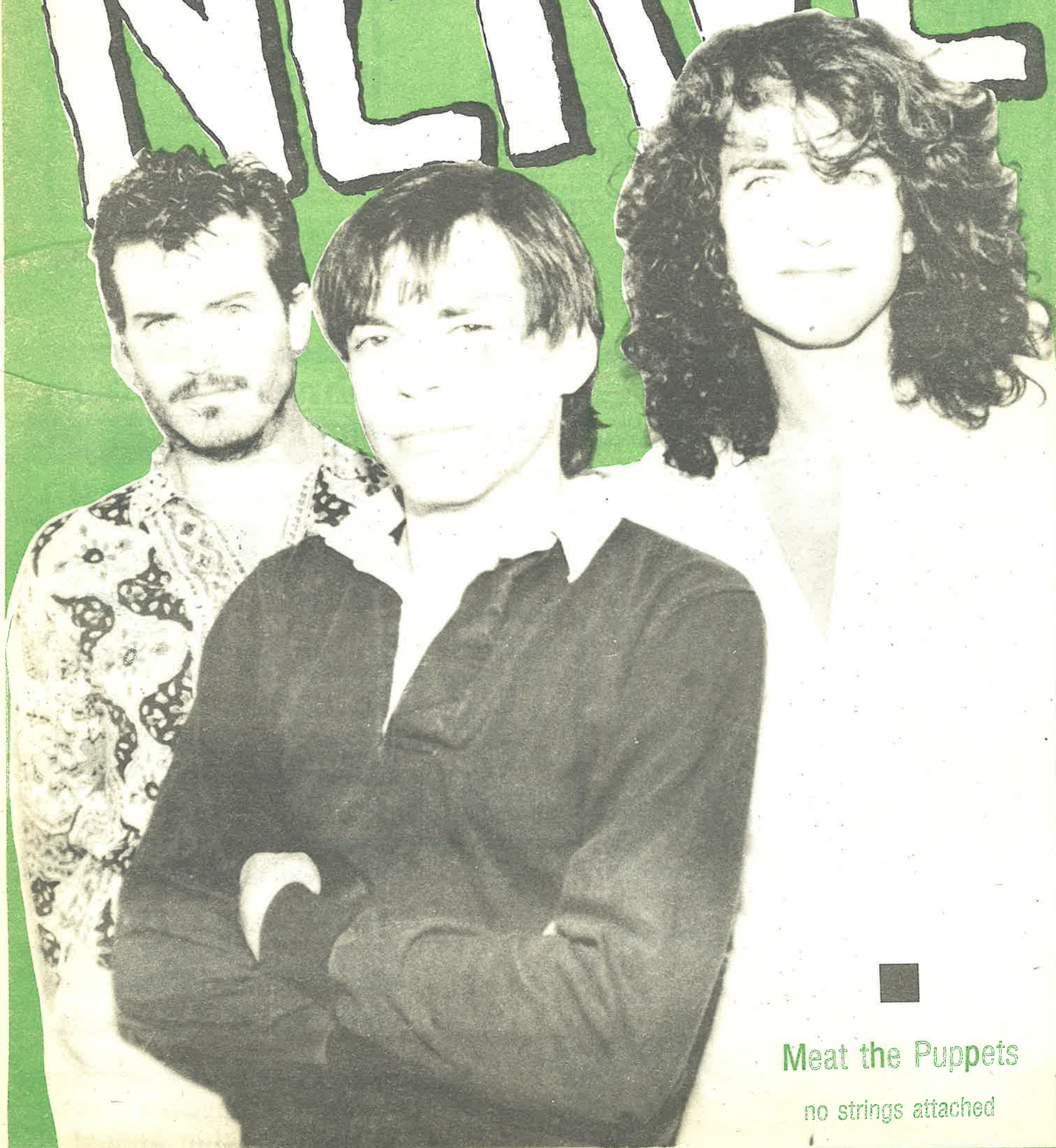


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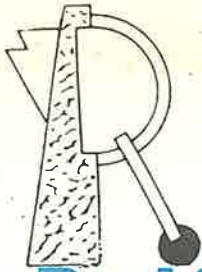
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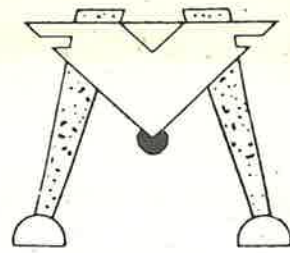
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EDITOR/PUBLISHERS

Nancy Lanthier
Dave MacIntosh

LAYOUT/DESIGN

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PHOTO EDITOR

Chris Buck

WRITERS

Phillip Dellio
Rick McGinnis
Chris Twomey
Howard Druckman
Dave Bidini
Tim Powis
Steve Good
Denis Seguin
Helen Lee
Elliot Lefko
Sigmund Pileddriver
Gibby Clappett
Scott Woods
Kyle Swanson
B.F. Mowat
Dave Rave

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Chris Buck
Steve Ralph
Steve Good
Rick McGinnis
Mike Dyer
William
Heather Blurton
Lynn Farrell

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Michael Sarazen

COVER PHOTO

SST Records

GRAPHICS

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- page 5: *even more R&R philosophy from Rank & File and True Believers.* Vancouver pop sensations 54-40 pick their noses until it hurts.
- page 6: *the Grape And Spillage crew visit Rock & Roll Heaven; a rare confrontation with rock superstar Hunter S. Thompson.*
- page 7: *Phil Dellio goes to Arizona to 'find his inner self' and score some peyote, and instead comes away with an interview with America's best band post-punk desert-rock avant-thrash merchants of metal, The Meat Puppets.*
- page 8: *Rick McGinnis traces his roots and finds he's related to The Pogues. We print his article as a token of our sympathy.*
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- page 10: *Live reviews of Dylan, Test Dept, Breeding Ground, One Of One, the Monkees, and more.*
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Jazz Butcher Pat Fish —Mike Dyer

Gen's—Real Men

(dialect: Bloody Nonsense; translation: P. Fish, 1986) Genuine, genial, ingenious.

A marvelous thing, the English language. A root word, get this, created solely for a British pop musician named Pat Fish, singer, songwriter and co-guitarist of Jazz Butcher Conspiracy (as they will henceforth be known).

Wow. Gestural, articulate, and insightful are good, too. What's in a name?

"Indeed. It's only a name, like Pat Fish is only a name." The conspiracy arises from the creative collaboration that is "more than just the four people on stage." Through a "convoluted series of accidents, including a brief association with David J (ex Bauhaus, now in Love & Rockets), the final line-up includes Max (guitar), Mr. Jones (drums) Felix (bass).

"We are fully aware of the absurdity of all this"

Several years back, Pat promptly shed his academic skin after realizing, "I was living out other people's ambitions rather than my own." Studying Aristotle and Kant at Oxford U was "a real waste of time," and, getting together with David J in '83, the other man about Northamptonshire ("it was a little ridiculous: we were wearing the same clothes, liked the same music, read the same books, even the obscure ones"), they set out to make some music and "have fun doing it." Another rock band is born. But this time, it's a bunch of cracked philosophers who wrestle with the morality of suicide and other *Big Questions*—the existential crisis encapsulated in a three minute pop song.

"I don't trust people with beards."

But Tom Waits only has a scruff so he's okay, as are the Weather Prophets, the Pogues, and the Jesus And Mary Chain. Although his pals The Woodentops are "a bit smoother than they ought to be," Pat concedes, "fair enough, they want to make some money." The heart's still mending, though, from the shock he got from

the pages of *Interview*: "I'm thinking, yeah, it's true; all Andy Warhol cares about is making money. I turn the page and there's Louis Reed on his stupid little beachbox thing." Exit personal God.

But their fantastic pop song, 'Human Jungle,' with its 'Walk on the Wild Side' bass line, a go-go lyric ("I know all about your house, I know all about your mouth") and marzipan cool is pure Lou. The Velvets are the thing. They're cute beyond belief, so sweet."

"We're not quite the ones for the 'plug the product' department"

No, they aren't, so the honors are mine. Their first domestic release, the juicy, quirky *Bloody Nonsense* is a compilation of three British albums—a situation that Pat finds embarrassing. "British fans ask, 'what are they putting out this crap for again?' And I sympathize." Their next album, recorded several months ago, will be released in October. Called *Distressed Gentle Folk*, the cover art is Pat's collage of solitary icons such as Judy Garland, Brian Wilson, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka. "There are also some animals, like a cat in some kind of test machine—it's obviously not going to come out of it alive."

It's unnerving: the punk ethos ("we do what we want") meets Aztec Camera pop sensibility and out-intellectualizes Lloyd Cole on the way. Forget Leonard Cohen, it's the twisted brilliance of Hunter S. Thompson.

Pat's taking a breather (how normally can you breathe with a record company rep. on one side and Mike Dyer's power winder on the other?). They'll be taking on the "bible-thumping fundamentalists who burn pop records" (ie, Americans) this month, playing in venues of "small bits of cardboard and toothpicks."

Godsend and godspeed. Look no further, as Pat insists, "the flesh and blood is all there is." Bloodsuckers, Imagemakers, step aside, because the conspiracy is coming to town.

Helen Lee

the joy of
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TIME

5440

54:40 —WEA



54-40 plays music for its own sake. They don't have neat hairdos or a teen image. Good songs, played at maximum intensity is their credo, and their burgeoning popularity is just dessert for the foursome. Taking their name from James Polk's 1844 Presidential Campaign slogan '54-40 or Fight,' the Vancouver band was formed in 1980 by singer Neil Osborne and bassist Brad Merritt, and have run the gamut from punk to energized folk, thrash and arena rock, fused with Osborne's oblique, searching lyrics. With Vancouver's MoDaMu Records, they've put out two EPs and 1984's critically acclaimed (read: great record but no sales) *Set The Fire*. The new, self-titled album is their first for Warner Bros. and it's their most intriguing effort yet.

Brad Merritt spoke to the Nerve from Vancouver, revealing the 54-40 Philosophy.

How did you feel with Dave Ogilvie's production and Dave Jerden's (Talking Head's *Remain In Light*, Stones' *Dirty Work*) remix?

"Dave Ogilvie has been with us for years. He's stuck with us through thick and thin, from our first eight-tracks. Jerden came into the picture after WEA suggested a remix of the tapes for the album. We agreed, not having the time or money originally to do it thoroughly. He brought new ears and new life to the project—an inspiration to work with."

It must be weird to do a record and not see it for six months. "Extremely weird."

By now, I suppose your music is undergoing more changes, and the record might almost seem an unfair assessment of where the band is.

"Yes indeed. I would say that's very appropriate."

54-40 seems to be finally garnering wider public recognition. Are you still bigger in California than you are in Vancouver?

"We are. It happens with a lot of bands—in your home town, you're taken for granted. California is quite impressed with the quality of Vancouver bands. Their main music seems to be skatepunk and that sort of thing. I think we've got a pretty good music scene."

Now that you're signed with Warner Bros., what do you think of the record industry?

"That's a very loaded question. We have complete artistic control, so we're happy with that end of things. It's the place for us, with the kind of deal we have. We'd already done the new record on our own, from March to September last year, at Vancouver's Mushroom Studios. We toured down the coast and there was a lot of interest from many quarters, so we ended up getting a nice deal with Warners. Sadly, some people think that what we've done isn't politically correct, that we've sold out."

Tell 'em to listen to the record.

"Exactly. If it's there, it's there, if it's not, it's not. With this band, the most important thing is the music. I'm sure lots of people have said this: everything revolves around the music, the song. Nothing is going to get in front of it. Whether it be the record label, the business, t-shirt sales, an image, no hair-cut, or whatever. We're here for the sake of making these songs, and presenting them in the best possible light. We stand behind that. That's where it is—the proof's in the groove."

Kyle Swanson

Rank & File + True Believers

cut from

the same mold

Sure, the True Believers are from somewhere in the Southern States, right? And they're a back-to-basics guitar rock band, right?

Well, then we can assume these guys all must be graduates of the school of New American Rock bands.

WRONG. If you so much as mention their name in the same sentence as "that American sound," in front of them, you're damn likely to get a clip upside the head.

The True Believers have every reason to loathe being stereotyped. The Austin band's live show is equivalent to a musical assault. It may take a while for the band to get rolling, but when the three-guitar frontline starts to smoke...They even had the gall to end their set with AC/DC's 'Highway To Hell.' The sound is accomplished by guitarists Javier and Alejandro Escavedo, and John Dee Graham. The bottom end is supplied by bassist Denny DeGorio and drummer Alex Foley.

What erks the Believers most about the association with the country bandwagon is what they see as a lack of sincerity in that music.

"A lot of this new country rock stuff is just garbage," Alejandro says. "These bands will just turn their backs on it when it's convenient to do so."

"It's as if those roots rock bands had their roots cut off at 1960," says John Dee Graham, "it's like they're trying to be antiques."

Escavedo explains: "We all started playing around 1977 in punk bands like The Offs, The Nuns and The Zeros. So roots rock to us is as much Iggy and the Stooges, Velvet Underground, MC5 and New York Dolls as it is the country stuff."



Javier Escavedo —Steve Good

The Believers are currently involved in the largest tour in the band's brief history, taking them across North America. Last year they only hit western Canada when they toured with the Los Lobos. They hope the intense touring will bring folks to the record stores to pick up their album, *True Believers*.

The album is a solid collection of guitar rock. While songs like 'Rebel Kind,' 'Ring the Bell' and 'Hard Road' make clear the band's intention to produce a straightforward rock and roll groove, they can only hint at the power of the band at its live best.

Escavedo is quick to point out, "The album was recorded a year ago. We've done a lot of touring and playing in that year and the sound has gotten heavier."

The band's willingness to tamper with tradition was evident at their record release party in Austin.

"Everyone expected us to play our album," Escavedo says. "We came out and did everything but our own songs. The record company guys were shaking their heads and saying to our manager, 'they're not gonna do this tonight.' We just wanted to have a party."

That's the True Believer's philosophy: having a good time, playing what they want to.

Escavedo says the main reason he left Rank and File was the strict order of the band. "People couldn't believe it when I left. But I wasn't having a good time, we had to stick to that country thing."

He's content now, and the Believers are digging this tour every step of the way. Right now the boys are happy to jump in the van and motor around the continent listening to such diverse music as Bob Marley, George Jones, Lefty Frizzel, The Replacements, David Lee Roth, Hanoi Rocks and Motorhead as they prepare to record a second album.

Graham: "I don't know how, but all that stuff shows up in our sound."

N

Just when hoards of new country folk have got their Setons broken in and their pearl button shirts back from the cleaners, it seems the pioneers of cowpunk have shunned the music that made them.

Rank and File, who raised cane a few years back by playing authentic country music in Austin punk bars, have cut loose with a new barrel blazing rock and roll sound.



Chip Kinman —Steve Good

Guitarist/singer Chip Kinman has let his blonde locks grow, and leaps around the stage with some heavy rock posturing. When he says, "it's gonna be a bitchin' night!" that's exactly what you get.

According to bassist Tony Kinman, Rank isn't abandoning their country roots, they are evolving as a band. The evolution is spurred by the addition of guitarist Jeff Ross, drummer Bob Kahr and a discontentment with a bogged down scene.

"We created that sound, cowpunk or whatever you want to call it. We opened the door and now a million bands have gone through it," Tony says. "It got boring hearing so many bands doing the same thing. Or some guy would come up and say (with a dopey voice) 'hey man, I just picked up an Ernest Tubb album.' We've heard it all before."

Not that Kinman thinks any less of the music that put Rank on the map. "We were very careful to keep that country sound. We thought it was important at the time, and it was because no one was doing it. Now we're loosening up and not restricting ourselves."

The band is still faithful to old numbers like 'Sundown,' 'Conductor Wore Black' and 'Rank and File.' What makes them great is the band preserves the original infectious country feel of the songs but adds ripping guitar soloing and powerful chording to drive them home. The country covers like 'Old, Old Man,' and 'White Lightning' were given the usual Rank and File treatment of superb vocal harmonies and a pulsating beat, but louder than ever.

Much of the new punch in the band comes from the wicked picking fingers of Jeff Ross.

"He's a world class player," Kinman says, "he brought in a whole new set of influences and capabilities. It was like, wow, with him we can do anything."

Kinman is anxious to get into the studio next month to start recording their third album. Unlike the past two, which he thinks were great albums but too producer-controlled, the band has specific plans in mind for this record.

"We want a loud rock and roll album. The kind of album you put on when you're getting ready to go out at night. After you hear it, you say, 'Man, I gotta listen to that again.' So you listen even louder and piss off your neighbours and the landlord. That's the kind of album we want to make."

Steve Good

their
number's
up

Grape & Spillage

Denis Seguin springs for a round

I think rainy days are the pivots of my existence. It rained this evening and, as they always do, the drops crashing onto my useless radio awoke me. My window sill learned how to leak last week and the weather has been giving it a lot of practise. So as you read this, imagine, as well, the sound of rain drops hitting garbage bags.

I went to Rock and Roll Heaven and it wasn't raining, if you know what I mean. Rather it was Friday night and I wasn't anticipating anything more than some "honest" rock and roll and a gathering of "honest" rock and rollers.

I pause here for station identification.

This is Grape and Spillage, part of a continuing research project adhering to the notion that everything you see and do becomes a part of you.

Rock and Roll Heaven, formerly Heaven, came into being when management thought their club lacked direction. Situated in the Hudson's Bay Centre at Yonge and Bloor, it's at the half-way point between the sleaze of the Yonge strip and the sheesh of Yorkville; as a result, it's got a little of both—"sleazish." Definitely a murky combination; thus change was warranted and a new name was an obvious starting point.

I've always thought it dangerous to take on a name one has to live up to, and Heaven is about as far as you can go. Valhalla Inns get away with it because there aren't Vikings around to make comparisons. But heaven is a concept the average "honest" Canadian can appreciate if not quite comprehend. It's certainly a subjective term—when we consider just how long we will be dead, it's nice to envisage a private eternity knee deep in lemonade and tequila: but that's me—to each his own heaven.

Nerve photo ed. Chris Buck and I weren't feeling too demonic but it took us about three nanoseconds to be disappointingly surprised with Rock and Roll Heaven. The first person I encountered asked me if I knew, as he looked furtively about, of another club he could go to; then he glanced down at his clothes as though mutely asking my eyes to follow his and aid the suggestion process. The next person was a waitress. She looked like a refugee from an aerobics class, with ass-grasping Spandex, cutesy-pie leg warmers, and just enough protruding flesh to put a feminist into seizures. I'm not accustomed to being served by scantily clad people but surely the peep show theory is behind it all. Whether or not the tips are inversely proportional to square inches of fabric is another story, but apparently the waitresses can wear what they choose.

Across the way there was a "band" playing. They were from Cleveland, the birthplace of rock and roll. They called themselves Cleveland, and they tried to please everyone while pleasing no one. I tried my darndest to find other entertainment but you just don't ignore people who play at Aerosmith and U2 and mean it. This certainly wasn't the "honest" rock and roll we had anticipated. Nor was there significant representation from the 'fucked-up hippy burn-out dude' community (FUHBOD, pronounced: "foob"); the clientele was strictly male impersonator. Fuhbods incarnate everything you detest in "honest" rock and roll slavishness, the kind of charmers who aspire to play in a Journey cover band and shamble about in over-powered and undertuned late model sedans. There were a couple of fuhbods at Rock and Roll Heaven and they must have hated it.

Buck and I sought refuge at a bar at the fun end of the club. A problem child who had grown up and was wearing a Leafs' sweater sat across the way, making faces at the bartender. It plainly took all of his concentration to control the muscular labyrinth beneath his drunken pallor; he didn't notice our arrival or the grateful pirohuetta performed by the bartender in order to serve us. He just sat there: Machiavelli 'sans cervelle.'

Sheila gave me a Miller and Buck a

weird look when he didn't order anything; they don't encounter many abstainers in Rock and Roll Heaven. Sheila gave me another Miller and we asked her name.

"Sheila. What're you guys doin'."

"Writing an article."

"For what?"

"The Nerve."

"The what?"

It was obvious that we were in foreign territory so I stuck to the stock "friendly inquiries." I could imagine being hustled out by Frank and Tony

for probing into the gutters of Rock and Roll Heaven.

"So...what sort of crowds do you get here?"

"All kinds."

It went on like that. I left the probing to Buck; he liked her. Aw what the heck, so did I. After all, what am I? A fag?

Rock and Roll Heaven isn't that bad. The staff are friendly and the decor is ideal for conversation starters: the centerpiece of the space is a monument to impaired driving, a '50s Buick complete with a Q107 drink'n'drive sticker, crashing to earth with two cheery occupants, including one large bear. "Say that looks like the wipe-out I took a couple years back, 'cept for my girlfriend wasn't quite so ugly. Ha ha ha. No just kidding...but seriously...nice shoes..." Feel free to use this line.

It was plainly time to leave. As we walked towards the exit, a manager who had been appraised of our mission stopped us. "Hey, hey," he said jovially, "whatever you do, guys, heh, heh, don't mention the band. Really, don't, okay? Thanks."

Don't mention it.

Denis Seguin



Heaven —Chris Buck

U.S. Doctor Grows Second Tongue!!!

This past week, Toronto played host to the voice of a generation, one of the bastions of fucked-up hippy burn-out dudism, a man who has single-handedly, relentlessly pulled the rug out from beneath some of the voices of another generation, from beneath some of the bastions of American conservatism—this man was in Toronto, made a cameo on CFNY, sneered at some spineless reporters and then cut out for warmer climes the day of his scheduled 'lecture,' leaving a sold-out Music Hall to its own devices. This man, who should be either canonized or vaporized, thought he had the upper hand on Toronto—and he did—but he had made one critical error: he underestimated the Nerve!

Using a cunning trail of gin tonics, two quarts Taqueray, two parts tonic, Thompson, the great and thirsty was lured into the steel jaws of a Nerve interview. After forty-five minutes of cat-and-mouse, ace Nerve penman Festus Chubster collared Thompson in the back seat of a Diamond cab.

Much of the tape was garbled and our transcript picks up the action in mid-stream:

Thompson: Cold...I...feel...so...cold.

Nerve!: Dr. Thompson? (shakes him) Dr. Thompson!

HT: (coming around) Pills...in my flight bag...next question...

N!: Your cancellation came as no surprise.

HT: Fate reared its ugly head and bit me in the ass. What can I say? I'm sorry.

N!: How is your son.

HT: Who?

N!: Your son Carlos. I understood that he was in an accident. Isn't that why you're departing so hurriedly?

HT: Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, he's fine. Tough kid...chip off the ol' cow pie.

(looks around)

Jesus, this is a nice city you got here.

N!: If he's fine, why are you leaving?

HT: I'm a doctor, dammit. My son will need medication only I can supply.

N!: But your doctorate is in Divinity.

HT: The soul is a very fragile thing.

N!: Can we discuss what you were going to discuss at your lecture? Let us know what we're missing.

HT: My notes are in my luggage.

N!: I thought I saw them in this flight bag (pulls out notes from bag).

This looks like Spanish.

HT: I always read in Spanish and translate...keeps me sharp.

N!: This is a road map of greater Managua...

HT: (grabbing) Give that here...(nervous laughter) just a hobby of mine. I'm, ah, fascinated by revolution.

N!: Doesn't it bother you to leave a sell-out show in the lurch?

HT: I must say, it's comforting to know that so many people are still willingly paying money to see me.

N!: I'm searching for guilt here.

HT: I know it. Keep digging—I feel a wave of emotion in my left lobe.

N!: You're nothing but a fraud.

HT: (alarmed) Oh no!

N!: Am I on the right track?

HT: No—I forgot to clean out my medicine cabinet back at the hotel.

N!: You stayed at Toronto's version of the Waldorf Astoria.

HT: Waldorf, my ass. Those pirates had better forward my stuff.

N!: What was it?

HT: Let's just say that if they don't send it to me, I hope they take it. All of it. If you don't know what you're doing with junk like that...(makes explosion sound). Where are we?

N!: The airport. Those are planes.

HT: (to driver) I thought I told you Marina Del Rey!

N!: Isn't that in Los Angeles?

HT: So? (looks out window) Where are we

N!: Are you always on drugs? Isn't there a real Hunter Thompson? A man who laughs and cries and reads Time?

HT: Sure. There are four in L.A. alone. When I'm on the road, I always check for other Thompsons in the phone book. You can be someone else without changing your name. One time I even dropped in on some Thompsons and ended up staying for dinner.

N!: That's amazing. Where was that?

HT: My hometown. Come to think of it, they did look sort of familiar...older than I remembered them. You got any money?

N!: We're almost at the terminal—why did you jump ship?

HT: You're a nosy little shit, so I'll come clean. I had another speaking engagement prior to this one and I blew my load.

Nothing left. I'd have been rehashing my hash.

N!: But isn't that what you've doing for years?

HT: (strikes reporter) Well, this is where I get off. Sorry about that slug, kid. I guess the truth hurts.

N!: (strained breathing) It sure does.

HT: Look, I'll make it up to you. You don't have to pay me the \$200 for the interview.

N!: Thanks.

HT: I'll take a hundred.



Trivia-time! Which one is H.S. Thompson?

From the ultimate mutant thrash of *In A Car* to the latest psychedelic throwback of *Out My Way* on America's hottest label SST Records, the Meat Puppets have put out some damn strange records. Based on the rambling, lean pickings and deadpan (approaching comatose) vocals of Curt Kirkwood, the bouyant bass of brother Cris and the drummings of Derrek Bostrom, they make the best American rock music since those other Brothers (Allman, Ramone, Doobie; take yer pick). Many long nights at Nerve Headquarters (pun intended) have ended in heated debate over the eternal question: Which Is The Best Meat Puppets Album? This may seem ludicrous, but consider the finely honed craftsmanship of the *Up On The Sun* platter (The Best; no argument), or the laid-back charm of *Meat Puppets II*. Was better music ever made by flesh and blood?

We put off calling meat man Curt Kirkwood for several months—his interviews in other publications hinted at unpleasant treatment of squishy rock writers, but half-man half-plankton Phil Dellio calmly made the call...

YOU NEED MEAT

Phil Dellio chews the fat with Curt Kirkwood

Here's how you interview Curt Kirkwood: get attuned to his disarmingly dry sense of humour as quickly as possible, then take it from there. Example: you ask him about similarities between the Puppets and the Surfers, and he solemnly intones, "Both bands have guitar players...both bands make up their participants solely with members of the human race...neither band uses cats." Take it in stride and try again. Eventually he's reflecting on his craft calmly, inquisitively and perceptively—far more so than his reputation as a wacked-out visionary prepares you for. Remember, Curt says he likes interviews, so maybe you should phone him up next week, just like I did.

So what about *Out My Way*? Is it, as this reviewer speculated last issue, something of a retreat to *Meat Puppets II*?

"I don't think we could really retreat; we've already surrendered. We're definitely not afraid of repeating ourselves. We've earned the right to

repeat ourselves because we've done so very little. I don't know. I even like moustaches, so I'm not too good a judge of what sounds like what."

I tell Curt that despite my considerable enthusiasm for the new record, 'Good Golly Miss Molly' doesn't really belong. Amazingly, he doesn't seem to care what I think.

"That's why we put it in there. As far as I'm concerned, obviously the best thing that could happen to us is that we fail completely."

"There's two great tragedies in life...not getting what you want and getting what you want. I think a lot of what we do is a blatant attempt to not follow any tried and true route to success at any level...what am I talking about? I'm trying to read mail."

Undivided attention—all right! We were talking about your Little Richard cover...

"'Good Golly, Miss Molly' is our attempt to become immensely famous. And I think we've succeeded—now everybody knows who we are. I can't go into a 7-11 without being recognized."

For all their manifest weirdness and complexity, the Puppets are primarily a song band. You know—The Beatles, Three Dog Night, The Mentors, that kind of thing. Is there tension between such infectious hummibility and your lyrical obscurity?

"I can't think of anything that's not obscure except for conversation, and I'm not interested in conversation when it comes to music. I want the lyrics to sound like the music does; I want the words to be as lyrical as the music."

Far too eager to interpret the Puppets' songs, I'd never considered Curt's lyrics as purely formal artifacts. But what he says makes a lot of sense; it goes some way towards explaining why I take such delight in singing along with nonsense like "oooooh, pistachios, turn your fingers red." ('Enchanted Pork Fist').

Nonetheless, there is the recurring theme of shrinking away from (or respecting) the mysteries of unattainable knowledge.

"I don't know why that is...I'm still trying to figure out 'Born In The U.S.A.' I don't think music is meant to be understood that much. These guys get up on stage, and they get down, and they rock out, and you're supposed to rock your butt back and forth, and take drugs and alcohol, and smooch with your sexual partner, and then go out and break things after the show."

"What were we talking about? Lyrics? My lyrics are meant to be funny. And some of it's meant to extract the wrong kind of chemical from your brain, to make you feel like you missed breakfast that morning."

Agreeing that there's a playful, child-like appeal to the Puppets' songs (Kirkwood has two children, and "a lot of my favorite music is the most whimsical"), Curt balks at the idea of writing third-person narratives.

"I don't write about fictionally named characters who go through the rigours of life in a certain way as to appeal to all the other people out there who are going through the rigours of life in ways that they can relate to...in a Bob Springsteen song, or whoever."

"I'll probably write something like that eventually, as soon as I'm done with all this other garbage."

Bob Dylan once commented on the lasting effect Minnesota autumns would come to have on his writing—a certain quality about the air he could never shake. Although I've never been to Arizona, I sense a similar naturalistic influence operating *Out Their Way* in the arid undercurrents of Puppethood.

"I'm afraid so—real heavily. It's a unique environment; it's really beautiful here. The environment's different to any other place in the country, so we wind up having a different point of view. Most people here do."

With Husker Du and The Minutemen gone from SST, the recent *Spin* interview indicates an inevitable increase in media attention for the band. Does Curt like interviews?

"As long as I'm given the upper hand and there's no artistic license involved on the writer's part whatsoever. No, I'm kidding. No, I'm not kidding. Yeah, I like interviews, they're fun."

Because you also have a reputation for verbal obscurity, do you think interviewers are intimidated by you?

"Intimidated? There's no reason to be intimidated by artists. Cops and burglars and muggers, but not artists. Especially not rock 'n roll recording artists; it's one of the most ridiculous occupations (Slightly less so than writing about rock 'n roll recording artists, I presume). I got into this because the only thing that didn't intimidate me was music."

I've been thinking a lot about AM radio lately, because of: a) the reluctant acceptance that 'Just Like Honey' isn't going to make number-99, much less number-one; b) The Ramones, and c) the prospect of spending half my waking hours staring into the black abyss of the CHUM Top 30.

This may sound absurd, but Curt Kirkwood probably thinks about radio too.

I started to really pay attention to the AM between '71 and '73; even then, already removed from radio's period of greatness, unconventional performers from Lou Reed to Jethro Tull to Alice Cooper to Pink Floyd were enjoying the odd hit single. The point is—and Curt would understand this, and if you're over twenty you will too—it wasn't always the way it is now, nor does it always have to be.

It's an obscene joke that we've been conditioned to take it for granted that the Meat Puppets can't be played on AM. I think 'The Other Side' would sound terrific blasting from a car radio.

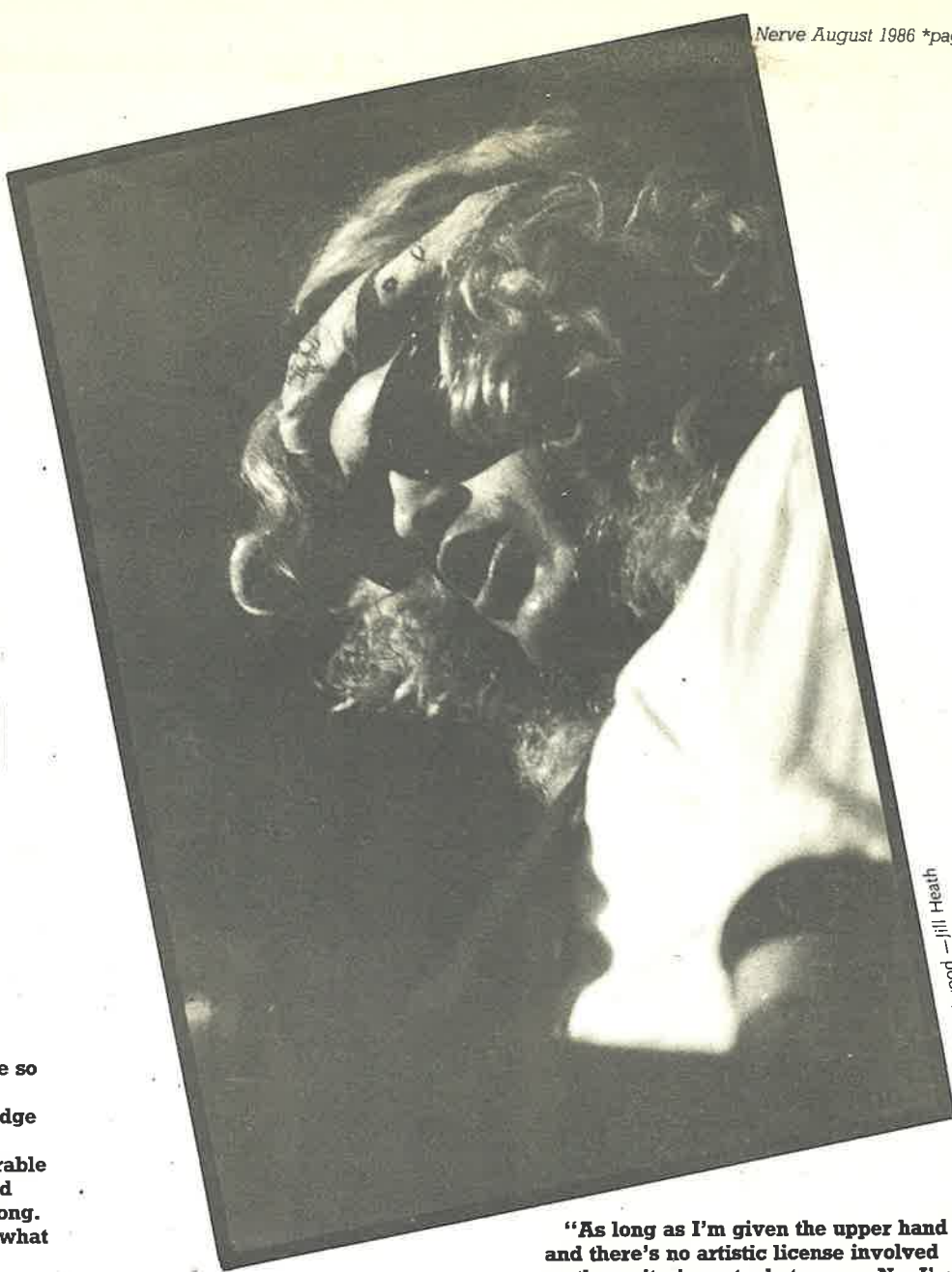
"I don't know what it takes exactly to do that, if somebody buys their way onto it or what. I don't know that much about it."

"I don't know if the mass populous knows what they want, likes what they want, or wants what they like, or if the programmers want them to want what they like, or if the programmers want to play what the populous likes..."

"It's a mystery to me. We go out of our way to be commercial, and at the same time to be as excruciatingly rock 'n roll about it as we can. I've heard us played between actual Bob Seger music, and it sounded great to me."

The records sound great to me, too. Of course, I'm not much closer to understanding why; maybe their appeal is strictly sensory, or maybe they work on some deep Jungian level, or on some deeper Freudian level, or maybe Curt's cover paintings are a highly advanced form of mind control, or maybe...

"I don't know why people like them either. It's not so much an identifiable thing, it seems more like it's the charm that goes into them. I mean real charm, like a spell. I think it has a lot to do with the love of doing it."



Curt Kirkwood — Jill Heath



Curt Kirkwood — Jill Heath



Shane MacGowan—MCA

when you're a pogue you're a POGUE

RICK MCGINNIS

"All these Murphys, Molloyes and Malones do not fool me. They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and of me alone. But I just said I have spoken of me, and speaking of me, I don't care a curse what I just said."

Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*.

The latest saviours of rock and roll limped into Toronto, their bus having broken down at some indeterminate point outside the city. "What are you going to do after they finish the tour?" the driver, a crusty Southerner, was asked. "Fumigate the bus," he answered.

Lucky even to get an interview, I encountered not the lead Pogue, Shane MacGowan of the dental disaster fame, but James Fearnley, accordionist, and Spider Stacey, tin flute virtuoso. Fearnley, a rail of a man with the casual demeanor of a private school history tutor, seems to have cornered the market on dignity among the Pogues. He also manages to play a squeeze box with the same *savoir cool* that Keith Richards brings to the guitar. Stacey is a different kind of bird. Wearing a tie with a shirt torn of its buttons, he comes off as a bit bar-worn. Wielding cockney sarcasm with the ease of a habitual joker, he would often find occasion to hiss out a glottal, mischievous chuckle, sounding not too unlike Ernie on Sesame Street.

Well into the interview, when I felt them to be a bit at ease, I had to bring up the issue that trails the Pogues from interview to review to interview: booze.

"I've got a bit fed up with it, as a matter of fact," James says, obviously hoping to end the matter there.

"We drink," Spider adds, "but so do most other people. We don't drink a particularly large amount."

"I suppose when we started off we did drink quite a lot," James says, resigned to addressing the subject once more.

"When you're new to anything you sort of..."

"Actually that's wrong. Some of us have been in groups that made quite a habit of getting drunk before going on stage."

"Well, yeah, I was including them."

"I've seen you drink on stage with the Nips before so don't give me that bollocks."

"I was never drunk on stage with the Nips."

"OH JAMES! WASH your mouth out with SOAP!" Spider squeals in the voice of an enraged Southern school marm.

"THAT'S A BLACK LIE!" Spider leans back laughing, then continues with an ironic drawl. "Okay, James was never drunk on stage with the Nips...I was always drunk on stage."

We continue on the drinking debate until Spider pinpoints where the inevitable "Pogues-as-drunken-music" conclusion chafes him:

"It's a kind of racism, really. The whole 'drunken Paddy' thing. It's a bit insulting."

The Pogues do make good drinking music, but so do Buckwheat Zydeco, Elmore James, Black Flag, and Johann Sebastian Bach. The Irish are reputedly a drinking people, but so are the Germans. The Pogues recurring battle with the boozy metaphor should stand as a warning for the first polka-punk band that finds itself signed to a major label.

As for the appeal of the Pogues, it would be facile to say that their music struck an ancestral chord in me. Rather, the Pogues have found a new way to tackle this beast called rock and roll, an enigmatic creature with the ability to sprout new limbs where ever it is hit. If bands like the Pogues continue their assault, pretty soon we won't recognize the thing, and that is undeniably good.

In the absence of Shane, his presence is inevitable in any discussion of the band's creative machinery.

"I remember sitting around at some girl's flat with Shane," Spider recalls, "and he was fiddling around with the guitar, and he started singing 'Paddy on the Railway' which is an old Irish number, one of the cover versions we do, but he started doing it really, really, fast. It was on this Dubliners album we used to listen to. This was a while before the Pogues started and it definitely must have sparked something in Shane's mind. The way he does things—there's the input, and the moment it goes in, everything starts to go into gear. The actual output might not appear till nearly a year later, or suddenly it'll be there. I think he likes to take his time with things."

Another cornerstone of the Pogues' reputation is the manic energy with which they approach live shows. Certainly, on record, songs like 'Waxie's Dargle,' 'Down in the Ground Where the Dead Men Go' and 'The Sick Bed of Cuchulain' give the game away, strongly suggesting a powerful live presence.

"The fact we play all fast, I think that's simply because it hasn't occurred to us to do it any other way," Spider says.

"I don't think we could have done it any other way," James adds. "I don't think it comes out of our personalities to play as furiously as we do."

"I think it does," Spider says abruptly. "I think we're all fu..."

"...You think we're all furious? I'm not!"

"Everybody's got a certain manic streak in them."

"Yeah, I'll give you that. That's true."

"With the exception of Terry (Woods), who's a different case entirely, everybody was really into punk. I think the vehemence with which we deliver..."

"...is because at the beginning we couldn't play very well."

"We'd just try to disguise it."

"By just walking on and going BOOM! This is yours, we don't want it anymore!"

James goes on to describe one of the band's best gigs, in London on St. Patrick's night.

"I was really tickled by one review of that night. I don't know who the journalist was, but he mentioned someone going into

the toilets and he had one leg of his jeans missing, his left shoe missing, and no shirt on his back. We get all these clothes thrown on stage, we get shoes..."

"...We always get shoes for some reason. We've had one bra, just one fucking bra. That was in France."

A side effect of playing even vaguely Irish music in a political climate as shaky as Britain is that a band like the Pogues are expected to answer for centuries-old problems in a three-minute tune. But this doesn't interest the band.

"We don't write songs that deal with specific political situations," Spider explains. "We do songs that are about broad issues. The general anti-war, anti-authority stance I think is implicit in what we do; it might not be stated but it's implied. It's not our business to make statements about (the Troubles in Northern Ireland). Everybody in the band has their own opinions, but that doesn't add up to the band having a particular platform."

Perhaps the best publicity the band ever received was in an interview with Tom Waits around the time his last album *Rain Dogs* was released. Asked who he listens to, he named a few terribly obscure people and then the Pogues, who he compared to rowdy Irish troubadours the Clancy Brothers. "They're like the Dead End Kids on a leaky boat...there's something really nice about them."

"That was great—we feel the same way about him. Not that he's like a drunken Clancy Brother—well I suppose he is like a drunken Clancy Brother. Maybe if he shaved that silly beard off. (laughter) It's a nice beard, Tom!"

"Maybe if he got rid of those alligator shoes."

The Pogues have gotten this far on what is perceived as a novelty, although from the band's account it seems to have been less intentional than that. As accidentally as they came upon Celtic folk-punk, it seems that they'll continue to absorb musical styles until, far from being a novelty, the Pogues could make an indelible stamp in rock history. Until then, they're more fun than being smuggled into a women's prison on a full moon, and while I'm at it, kiss me, dammit, I'm Irish.

The whole gang—MCA



by Dave Bidini

GOOD GRASS



l-r: Richard Gregory, Gord Cumming, Patrick Gregory, Mike Duggan —Lynn Farrell

...I ain't got no faith in superheroes, much less pop bands from Scarborough...

Within Toronto's crowded pop dustbin, The Lawn will not serve as has-beens.

Under a butter-thick June sky in the unconscious hours of the daytime, the summer is unfurled off the nub of Gord Cumming's Winwell baseball bat. Out in left field stand the rest of The Lawn, pounding their mitts, drinking half-sacks and whistling Dixie. Like the immortal fly ball that streams across the diamond, The Lawn move with tradition, one that was started some ten years ago in a Highland Creek basement and eventually grew to fruition in the form of the great Woods Are Full of Cuckoos.

Today, with the Cuckoos long gone, The Lawn step in to keep the pact, writing more songs about jetpacks and bluefish to astonish their few hundred fans. In a matter of months, The Lawn have proved themselves reliable; they aren't those old Cuckoos, and they ain't the Plasterscene Replicas, but they have sufficiently clogged the vacuum that opened with the demise of their seminal band.

One steaming-hot weekend last June, over a period of four hours on the legendary Cabana Room stage, Toronto lost both the Replicas and the Cuckoos, arguably the two best local bands ever. The tradition that pervaded these groups—innovative songs, intense performances—have forced The Lawn to measure up in every way; you can go back to the suburbs to find these qualities in The Lawn's collective first groups, among them the Vegetable Friends, the West Hillbillies and Torchy and the Battery Boys. Today, over burgers and Budwiesers at the Lawn's livingroom table,

Gord, Patrick, Richard and Mike sit with the weight of the world on their shoulders, trying to divert questions by discussing Wendel Clark, P.G. Wodehouse, Jethro Tull and Oil Can Boyd. But it won't work. I'm way too shrewd to let them get off easy...

...Say you went to a desert island with a bunch of guys you'd never met before. Just say that you had to, okay? So you get to the island, scout around for a while, and discover that everyone has brought the SAME ALBUM to play! Soon, after listening to that one, dumb album, you hear about ANOTHER ISLAND that, coincidentally, is just around the corner. So you pack up and go visit and when you arrive there, you find out that those guys, the ones living on the other island, have brought the SAME ALBUM as you did! You're blown. Whatta drag... But maybe from now on you start humming something different...

This philosophy, which works overtime with emphatic, whirl-about sentences, is attributed to Gord, who pushed another Bud in my direction and starts telling me about the time in highschool when he was thrown against a fence 35 times by his nemesis, the evil Vince Probert ("I called his girlfriend a fat hippy cow," he admits.) His comic-book past aside, Gord Cummings is the patron saint of the T.O. pop scene; a hoser, shaman, drop-out, ex-bank teller, goofball who sings like Roy Orbison with hiccups and writes songs about balooga whales. The Lord couldn't have constructed a more perfect caricature: he plays bottleneck guitar, stays up real late to watch Blue Jay reruns, and scrawls poetic amidst The Lawn's jarring rock and roll. Richard Gregory, the Lawn's bassist who is tall, blond and built like Canadian timber, attacks Gord and wrestles him to the ground, somewhat offended by an obscure insult that I cannot detect.

Things are getting out of hand. This is the perfect time to interview The Lawn.

NI: For those who are unfamiliar with your gospel, would you say The Lawn's strength is based on two points, your interpretation of traditional rock and your ability to find success through beer?

GORD: Awwwww, don't say that. We had a reputation as a drinking band. Fine. But why propagate it? Why dwell on it?

PAT: The beer aspect is ordinary.

GORD: The whole idea of God showing up in my driveway ('Reconsider Baby,' The Lawn's best song) with a two-four is obviously something I've made up in my head. At the time I wrote that, I was just thinking "What the fuck is going on?" I was open, and still am open to any new spiritual knowledge. So there.

NI: Can you find spiritual knowledge through drinking?

GORD: C'mon Dave. Howard, askus a question.

(Howard puts his hand together, leans over and utters:) I find that so many of The Lawn's images are elemental. Shady streets, Balooa Whales, animals in 'Peace in the Valley,' water, blue skies, you know.

GORD: They're attractive images. They're not consciously 'elemental.' Who says we sing about nature n' stuff? Compared to who? Compared to singing about dope and booze?

PAT: I've never thought of it that way. We're not a worldly band. You have the choice when you either go the pseudo-political folkist or rockist way, or and I'm not preaching...but we're into...(gulp)...Pop/Rock. Aren't we?

RICH: I'm not, I'm into Tull, man.

PAT: No seriously; why attack modern day problems when you can approach common sense?

GORD: You can preach Earthlove without sounding like a hippy.

And The Lawn do just that, singing more about elemental things than about cliched human troubles, be they Governmental oppression or "My-Baby-Just-Left-Me-Oh-Ho"

songs. 'Peace in the Valley' is about emotional violence; 'Infinity Stripe' tells the tale of getting a haircut from a really fucked-up barber; 'Shady Street' deals with forgotten love in your very own home.

The Lawn, you see, hit home by writing about the everyday experience or, as Richard puts it, "Shedding new light on something which is common."

And this is why I love The Lawn: former band member Kurt Swinghammer had this to say: "I was into The Lawn because they had this rustic, Canadiana quality about them...really instinctive and warm.

Because they have no formal musical knowledge, the band, especially Patrick, comes up with innovative riffs and ideas, things that wouldn't normally be there for musicians who have studied. They come up with such new things...that they're almost, well, totally new."

Howard Druckman says: "The Lawn are impossibly good. They base their ideas around riffs and it just goes from there. There's not an inch of anything contrived. It's fresh. It's so different from the rest of that shit..."

Gord Cumming says, "Mike's an electronic whiz, Pat's got his B.A., but me and Richard, we got nuthin' better to do." The Lawn's style, which I figure demands an explanation at this point, goes something like this: Celtic, African and Western references, squared in by a repeating guitar phrase, poly-filled with meaty rhythms of drums and bass, and accented by Gord's wild vocal notes. If it must be labelled, it's kind of like Yankee rock 'n roll meets XTC, but that's not even close. Yeah, it's got a good beat, and maybe The Lawn's Will, such as it is, will triumph. They've got a lot going for them: A steady, switch-hitting line-up, thousands of stories to tell, and regular gigs at the Cabana Room. And a fan slouched over his typewriter, thoroughly convinced, and still trying to figure things out...

Breeding Ground Diamond

What's this thing called presence that charms the eye and arrests the soul? It's an artful seduction so obviously contrived, but so what?

John Shireff is kidding everyone, but, happy lentsils, he's not kidding himself. Perhaps the interpretive dance gestures approach insufferable pretension, but you've got to admit his lateral balance is a lot better than Jim Kerr's.

Besides, Breeding Ground's a local commodity, the staple of an emerging underground to be consumed at will. "Consume," the dark voice commands, and obediently we will. To a point.

The holier than thou, hipper than thee, we've got a cult following and we're gonna keep it' attitude of the band (it's a goddamn aura, all right), and the rarefied atmosphere which attends their shows merits some discussion. Some.

They're Queen Street gentry, you say. Yeah, yeah, I like Gormenghast, too. When we discovered (and rejected) Ayn Rand, the Breeding Ground Reunion EP was there. But does it excuse bad art (these Diamond walls get my vote) or, more pointedly, inconsistent songwriting? Qualifying it with a show that at moments cut the edge of brilliance and enigmatic drama (still the only local band who don't look silly shrouded in dry ice), I say yes, yes, yes. To a point.

Yes, the rendition of 'Happy Now I Know' (with Molly Johnson joining the lads) was hot, but why weren't there more moments like that? Yes, they were filming the show for a video (hence guitarist Hugh Gladish's red vinyl get-up and abbreviated state of inebriation), but wasn't the giant video screen simultaneously broadcasting the performance not only an excessively self-reflexive display of ego, but also downright ridiculous? Yes, they're capable of possessing every member of the audience in listening range of 'Reunion' full gulp.

And, the point?

Perhaps that false prophet (profit?) of possibilities, Jim Kerr, says it best: So close yet still so far.

Helen Lee

One Of One Cabana Room

There's a point (stressed) about sixty seconds from the end of a closed set by local band One Of One where the man with the voice Chas. Salmon stares at a point somewhere between here, there, yesterday, and the bridge of his nose, and it dawns on you that he's in an entirely different stratosphere while he shouts: "I was a child, Imagination running wild." At this point, and this is in a situation most resembling last call, and the last time you got a call, that kind of situation: it's a very profound moment of, ah, a minute of silent fury.

It recalls other seconds of pleasure Salmon has (not completely involuntarily) relinquished—at the expense of a few moments of obvious embarrassment at being so thoroughly ill-equipped for the rock thing. The band is of interest because Salmon entertained (some curious whims) brilliantly before with the Plasterscene Replicas, as fine a band who ever trod the boards.

This new show of limited strength, second in a continuing series, commences with the usual baring of progressive instincts. It's certainly not pop music. Think of bands like Yes, Genesis, then forget about them entirely: situational hazards, you know what I mean? The audience of about eight dozen regards the proceedings with a sense of tolerance, as the band played a variety of very complex folk music

Van Morrison

Kingswood Music Theatre

Refreshing. It's nice to go to a concert purely to listen, and to leave smiling. Van the Man is a musician. There were no spectacles, no lasers, dry ice or flashy electronic effects; just the Irish mystic and his 12-piece band, and music.

Morrison's songs, more often than not, are works of art, and the arrangements for this short, rare tour only enhance his artistry. He uses a string quartet perfectly, tastefully adding dashes of texture and contrast to his aural canvas, such as the breathtaking pizzicato break in 'Moondance.' The focus of the artistry was Van's sterling voice. Clean and pure throughout, it rang like crystal over the hot summer's eve.

With a catalogue as large and superlative as Morrison's, inevitably many great songs must be left out. Members of the vastly disparate audience (punks to yuppies) respectfully called out for classics from Astral Weeks and Tupelo Honey, but could not be displeased with Van's own choices, including a few of his excellent new album No Method, No Teacher, No Guru. No mere pop star, Morrison's work just keeps on improving.

Van doesn't move much on stage, uses no effects, and bases lighting on mood, not exaggeration. Yet the music made by this eternal leprechaun, strumming his guitar beside a dozen crack musicians, overshadows all of today's Video Trash. When Van Morrison is beneath the moon and the stars on a sweet July evening, music is all the beauty in the world.

Kyle Swanson

Art Of Noise Concert Hall

The drummer soloed with the sound of butterflies. Or was it trains? This show was too damn good and too damn confusing.

Data overload. JJ Jeczalik: two Fairlights, a PPG Wave 2.3, tie around head, cricket bat. Anne Dudley: Fairlight, PPG, grand piano. Bassist with the wildest strings imaginable. Conga player. Three 'Noisettes': superlative singing (the one on the right must have been sampled from Raquel Welch and Billie Holiday. Ouch!) One drummer, the fiercest looking maniac who ever triggered nine thousand sounds with inhuman timing.

Readout. Every hit performed perfectly, often moreso ('Legs'). Non-hits were even better, particularly 'Eye Of The Needle.' Anne Dudley with some smokin' blues piano. Everybody using voice controls—look, Ma, no hands! Birds flying, cars starting, doors slamming, you name it—all in gorgeous stereo. Pink Floyd would have approved. This was the best the Hall can sound, thanks to co-founder Gary Langan at the mixer.

Today's foremost extant technology, used intelligently, often very emotionally—the key obstacle overcome. A startlingly tight, seamless performance. A puntload of devastating, perfect moments. My ears will never be the same.

Kyle Swanson

with tentative resolve. All of a sudden, they peak: "Look at the name, remember the face that went with it," Salmon barks against the rhythm, and overall it's an authentic variation on what the rock situation demands of its true poets.

Unfortunately, the majority of what One Of One come up with is too easy on these ears. Something comes suspiciously close to standard '80s Heavy Awareness bar rock, with the band forcibly inflicting salsa rhythms and ambient sax riffs onto the bare flesh of the music. To be honest, and drastically premature, I prefer the guitar conflict of the Replicas to this band of musicians.

Something must break, or at least appear to. The Replicas were great because they had no right to be great. One of One have only ever played twice, but there's a common need for them to be excellent. Because Salmon's still trying to write the most perfect rock songs possible, without resorting to rock gestures or rock averageness. He very nearly succeeds, so I guess we'll call it even.

Dave Rave

August at the Horseshoe

1,2 Colleen Peterson
4,5 SYLUM No cover
6 L'ÉTRANGER RECORD RELEASE PARTY
11,12 ELECTRIC FIRE BROTHERS NO COVER
13 Changing Faces FUNK
14 Trudy Artman & the Famous Players
15 BLUE RODEO
16 The Proof
18,19 ACE BOY *NO COVER
20 Hollow-men
21 DAVID SEREDA BAND
22,23 Paul James
25,26 James Doolin AND THE JAGUARS NO COVER
27 RED ALERT
28 Robert Priest and the GREAT BIG FACE BAND
29,30 L'ÉTRANGER

Queen at Spadina 598-4753

Hotel isabella

AUGUST

UPSTAIRS

- 1-2 Jack DeKeyser Band
- 4-5 Pride
- 6 Excursion w/The Customers
- 7-8 Dead Heroes
- 9 Blair Martin Group
- 11-12 Too Much Too Soon
- 13 Mark Thackway & Paul Wickham
- 14-16 Tony Bird
- 18-19 Phlash Bak Blue
- 20-21 Middlebrook & the Works
- 22 Jack DeKeyser Band
- 23 Phantoms
- 25-26 Bleecker St. Band
- 27-30 Jack DeKeyser Band

DOWNSTAIRS

- 1: Brass Soldier
- 2: Big Parade
- 7: Bop Totem
- 8: Absolute Whores
- 9: George Hight & the Haunted Men
- 14: Johnny Trash
- 15-16: CeeDees
- 21: Johnny Analog
- 22-23: Crazy Felix
- 28: Johnny Trash
- 29-30: The Cartwrights

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Wed 6: My Pal Hoagy, Stop
Thurs 7: Heratix, Zuzu Petals
Fri 8: Sex Artists, The Good Things
Sat 10: View Masters

Tues 12: Cabana Cafe: Eugene Ripper
Wed 13: I.C.U., Crazy Felix
Thurs 14: Tea for 10, Laughing Apples, Bop Totem
Fri 15: Horse Opera, Parts Found In Sea
Sat 16: The Lawn, 3rd Man In

Tues 19: Cabana Cafe w/Steven Hafflidson
Wed 20: I.T., Broken Windows, Weather Men
Thurs 21: Chain of Fun, Living Room
Fri 22: Pretty Persuasion, Cheshyres
Sat 23: Dundrells, The Source

Tues 26: Cabana Cafe: Andrew Cash
Wed 27: Hungry Glass, Blue Delta
Thurs 28: U.I.C., Purple Toads
Fri 29: Vacation In Dresden
Sat 30: London's Suffer Machine

August at the Cabana Room

368-2846
460 King St. W.

**Bob Dylan/Tom Petty
Grateful Dead**

Buffalo: Rich Stadium

I'd missed The Grateful Dead - Allman Bros. - The Band spectacular of a decade ago. I'd missed seeing The Buffalo Bills and O.J. Simpson in performance, and I'd also missed the Stones circus, where 80,000 people rocked and rolled all night.

Yes, the closest I'd been to a rock and roll Event was The Garys' Police Picnics where everyone was real nice and The Talking Heads played, and everyone had a swell time. So when I got to Rich Stadium in Buffalo, U.S.A. for the recent Dylan-Petty-Dead Fourth of July show I was floored by the magnitude of the place. It was like watching the Tonight show all your life your bedroom and all of a sudden being in the front row of the studio audience.

But lets go back and examine the day as it began. We woke up really early and took a bus from the Eglinton Records On Wheels store, with lots of other wild looking people. That's when I fist ran into the Deadheads. Standing in line they sported their Dead paraphernalia—tie-dyed shirts, head bands—they looked like they'd been on this trip before.

The bus driver said hello, my name is Al, and we have a tapemachine up here, so if there's anything you'd like to hear...immediately someone from the back passed up a Zeppelin tape, the bus filled with smoke, and everyone began really digging the trip.

Before long we got close to the border and a tour person came on and said if you have any 'illegal activities' that you want to get rid of, go ahead now. But nobody cared, and the guy made one more attempt saying that the border guys would be sending dogs on board, and that the tour company was not responsible for getting you home if you were caught with anything. But it was no problem at the border because all the guard did was ask us for i.d. and made some crack about the show and we went through faster than you could say Jerry Garcia.

So we were over the border and it was really party time, as we joined a convoy of buses. Soon we were winding into Rich Stadium, where the streets were paved with Deadheads who had been camping out all week.

I got into the stadium and headed for the press section, but I immediately ditched that idea and began checking out the field action. One thing I noticed about the Deadheads was that they were all wearing these stickers from the grocery store that said 'freshly cut' or 'special 49¢' on their heads, shirts, or wherever. Who knows what it was for, besides a goofy bond that brought them all together.

Most of the people had come to see the Dead, and once they appeared on stage, for the first of their two sets, whole sections of fans began a non-stop dance. That's the best thing about the Dead, the show is in the stands, not just on stage. I watched it up-close, in the person of a 14-year-old girl dancing in an oversized tie-dyed shirt, mouthing the words to songs written before she was born, and I watched it from atop the highest row in the stadium, a whole sea of



Two old men rock out —Heather Blurton swaying deadheads.

Musically, the Dead are best described as pleasant. There are a few songs that rock, and are nice to hear, but they're not the type of group that will make an audience go crazy like the Stones, or even Aerosmith would. It was like a big rec-room party where everyone knows everybody else.

Tom Petty and Bob Dylan came on and tried hard to turn up the heat in the place. Petty gained ground with a short set of hits and his mad-hatter-let's-party-persona.

Dylan demanded more from the audience. Gone were the pretensions of the old Dylan, replaced by someone who was very confident in what they were doing and had a good band to play his material. They covered soul, gospel, rock, and during his solo spot, folk. Dylan's totally immersed in the 80's. He does new material, but he also covers all his big hits; 'Rolling Stone,' 'Blowing In The Wind,' 'Rainy Day Woman'...

Riding back on the bus was fun. Everyone still had their little bits of stuff that they did before and after the border. Someone flipped another Zep tape on and everyone was glad they'd made the trip.

Would I do it again? No, that was it. I guess my age is showing.

Elliott Lefko

**The Monkees
The Forum**

When I first heard about the Monkees reunion, it smelled of desperation and money. Even more so when I learned that ace

picker/songwriter Mike Nesmith wouldn't be along, and that the other three would be backed by eight studio pros. When I discovered they'd be on one of those oldies package tours I was pretty thoroughly disheartened.

The Monkees were never meant for a reunion tour. In '68, after two years of girls' screams and cleverly-crafted songs, they tried to commit commercial suicide in their movie "Head" (still among the best rock'n'roll movies ever made). Choking with frustration on their prefabricated image, they flushed the whole fucking system—and themselves with it—down the pipes in true Sex Pistols style. So the idea of a partial reunion 20 years later didn't sit well in this stomach.

But my alimentary canal really started to turn when I found Ontario Place literally swarming with more people than have ever showed up for a Forum gig. Three security barricades, and a full gaggle of police officers maintained order. Fans were rumored to have waited from 3:30 a.m. the night before.

Now, I like the Monkees, and old music, but this much fervor for 20-year-old music smells wrong. It smacks of the current, consumer-oriented nostalgia clogging our airwaves (the "new" CHUM AM; Beatles tunes exploited to sell beer) and, ultimately, our culture. It's blocking the best new sounds from any sort of meaningful exposure. Like Gil Scott-Heron says in 'B-Movie': "People want nostalgia. They want to go as far back as they can, even if it's only last week."

It got worse when the opening acts came out: Herman's Hermits (without Herman Peter Noone: ridiculous), Gary Puckett, and the Grass Roots (well, only one Grass Root with a backing band of pros). These guys must enjoy thier jobs: Put on a pink designer suit and casually toss off 20

minutes of your glory days to an adoring throng primed to lick it up. Next stop, the rhinestone suit at the Palace in Vegas. The singers always have that Peter Pan look of perpetual, professional youth.

To introduce Puckett they announced that he'd sold more records than the Beatles in '68; this does not mean shit in '86. Puckett wore the same black waistcoat that was his signature 20 years ago. "We love you to death," he cooed at the-crowd in a smarmy voice, and they loved him right back. It was sickening. Imagine the irony of our Grass Root singing a 20-year-old song entitled 'Live For Today' and you'll get the picture.

While waiting between sets, I pondered the differences between the Monkees—who I still enjoy—and these other clowns. I think the key is greater songs. None of these other bands had recorded anything to compare with 'Porpoise Song' or 'The Door Into Summer,' or 'I'm a Believer.'

The lights went on, the unified scream went up, an old phonograph appeared to play the Monkees theme, and Dolenz, Jones, and Tork came bouncing into view. At the end of the song, the record appeared to skip over and over again. In a triumph of 'Head' spirit, the boys proceeded to blow the turntable up with prop dynamite. That was the first cool thing I'd seen all day.

When he wasn't singing, Jones looked pretty vacant, and a bit weird with chin stubble; Dolenz is balding on top; Tork looked rail-thin, and had the same pimple on his lip that he had in Head. Their voices had held up better, and the harmonies were still there. Mickey did his same old Soul Man freakout schtick; the boys did their same old Marx Brothers comedy schtick.

Tork and Dolenz really played to the crowd, enticing fans within an arm's length, dancing like men possessed. The crowd went wild. In the movie "Head," the Monkees ran footage of an assassination in Vietnam, then a girl screaming, then a shot of themselves running onstage to put the scream in

another context. In 1986, the girls are still screaming, and for all the wrong reasons.

The little girls and the yuppies, that's who the show was intended for. The Monkees did creditable but inferior versions of all the huge hits—'A Little Bit Me, A Little Bit You,' 'Daydream Believer,' 'Valeri'—but you can bet they didn't do 'Porpoise Song.' Their new one, 'That Was Then, This Is Now,' at least accepted the difference between the past and present. That was the second cool thing I'd seen all day.

The third was their last encore, a version of 'Pleasant Valley Sunday' that managed to transcend everything. It was a superb but fleeting glimpse of the heights they'd once been capable of. But for the most part, that was then and this is now. I hope, for the sake of past glory, they don't do this again. I think all parties would benefit from a healthy respect for the dead.

Howard Druckman



Peter Tork —William



**Test Dept.
R.P.M.**

The first time I heard of Test Dept. was four years ago in the glossy pages of *The Face*. How exciting: five brawny blokes creating the closest thing to a 60's happening (stretch the imagination) in the obscure corners of an England ravaged by blitz and electrobeat.

Through some kind of esoteric grapevine, a few purveyors of the leading edge find out about a gig (probably in a junkyard) or two (this time in an abandoned dock warehouse). A few issues later, an interviewer glibly asks cover-throb Simon Le Bon's (remember when) opinion of "the latest thing." He's piqued: "Who are they?" The smarmy journalist is satisfied.

Too fitting, then, that a glitzy venue plays host to these working class youths. We're men of the soil and toil—breaking our backs like me dads in the mines, they suggest. But hol' how the ironies abound. LABOUR!! they shout to a culturally sophisticated audience who've paid dear sums to attend this officious event. OP-PRESSION!! they decry, within an inherently stratified performance situation that is further exacerbated by a 'genuine victim' cramming political rhetoric down our throats. Sadness. It recalls Billy Bragg playing Kingswood last summer while employees were picketing against the company's non-union policy.

But the musical imperative?

Primarily percussive sounds of pixillating, thunderous rhythms, with an occasional vocal delivery augmented by backing tapes that seem to strap down each, ah, song. Pyrotechnics aren't an entertainment imperative, but spontaneity certainly is a musical one—one that was lacking.

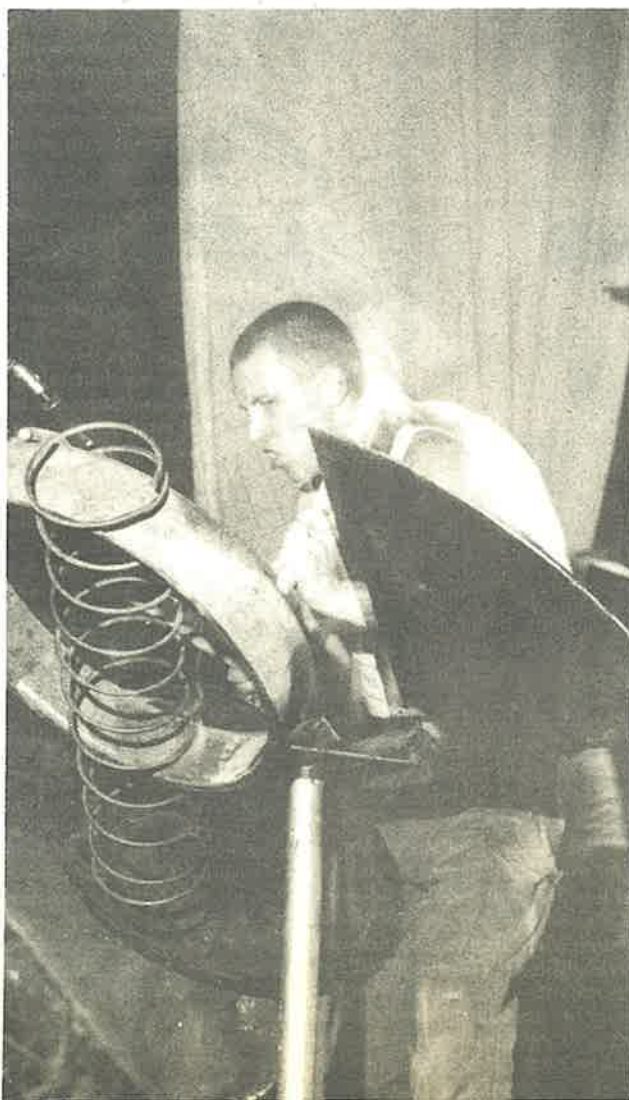
In addition to a drum kit and a huge, spiral, metal thang, they take their hammers to "found" objects they've scavenged on the day of the show. Far be it from me to suggest that this avant-garde aesthetic goes as far as to pay homage to Duchamp's ready-mades (have urinal, will sculpt; have scrap metal, will pound).

However, their pretensions to high-minded performance veer closer to art than their oft-compared colleagues, Einsturzende Neubauten (though both have been media stamped 'Industrial Music,' Test Dept. cannot construct from an ideological base like EN does with the German Economic Miracle). Witness the grand opening of the show—fifteen minutes of an operatic soundtrack accompanying a film of gymnastic students dangling on ropes. Okay, the description's a little cut'n'dry, but these premature demands for respect and awe are equally annoying.

Was I having trouble recovering from the horrible opening act, sword swallower Count Desmond, a shamefully sexist display of cheap spectacle and cheaper humour? Or was it yet another case of hype over matter, expectation over actuality?

Their multi-media presentation, a promise for intertextual depth and some neat sounds, wasn't entirely rescinded. Enough intense moments *did* make it worthwhile. Advice for the 80s: Eat fibre, watch Stan Brakhage films, give blood, see Test Dept.

Helen Lee



This week's special at Long & McQuade

**Q107 Homegrown Wingding
Diamond**

A bowling alley attendant once told me: "I wrote a song about this place way, way up above called Ledzeppelintown. It's a place where all the heavies, like Floyd and Genesis, go, to jam after they die. Not even the broads, the booze and the money of life on earth can keep them away."

In Ledzeppelintown, I figure you have to take a number to get in. Small-time musicians of the clubwheel do not get preferential treatment; instead, rock stars are greeted by Vogue models and escorted into holy sanctimony with 74 tractor trailers' worth of laser lights, bushelfuls of marijuana hemp, and new gold wings that lift them into some sort of metal nirvana. Outside its pearly gates there are long line-ups of pop has-beens and never-weres who get surly whenever a major star floats up to take his/her place with the band. Sometimes there are riots in Ledzeppelintown. Not everyone is treated fairly in this rock and roll Disneyland.

The bands who axed their way to the top of this year's Q107 Homegrown derby are quite obviously gunning for enlistment into Ledzeppelintown. Here, with small-dose dry

ice and mini-double bass drums, these local rock would-be's dress up in their stadium clothes and effectively act like it's Rich Stadium, with Mick and Keith hanging out backstage. Everest, Red Letter and Simon Chase all know the formula—they realize that it's got to be big, loud and trendy to make in-roads through the industry.

Only The Jitters, with their diluted pop/blues, understand that Ledzeppelintown is one huge private party. Their answer to excess and pomp and straightaway rock gore is daffy humour and poorboy romantic fluff. They are too humble to ever get into Ledzeppelintown.

Everest, with their beanpole Kim Carnes lookalike screecher, are perfectly tailored to be first in line when the Gods get around to looking over Toronto. Although their riffs are plain-jane Loverboy copies, Everest try to kick-ass and look pretty at the same time. The meek crowd goes crazy; the boys figure they're on the right track. Q107 hands them a nice, tidy gift and they praise the good Lord for a country that eats up all kinds of dinosaur shit. How long it will take Everest to get into Ledzeppelintown is undetermined. That they are on the first step up towards that place is undeniable.

Dave Bidini

FARM UPDATE

Vancouver celebrities **Skinny Puppy** do several Ontario dates in late September, including a night at R.P.M., and have a new 12 foot long single out on Nettwerk entitled 'Dig It.'... **L'Etranger** promote their new *Stick And Stones* EP with dates at The Bamboo (Aug 5th) and The Horseshoe (Aug 6th.) Rumours of drunken episodes while on tour out west are largely false... Gods of Rock **Soul Asylum** play RPM (Aug 12) along with Vancouver sensations **Slow...** **One Of One** (Chas. Salmon of **Plasterscene Replicas'** band) play the same night at Lee's Palace, and the scheduled gig by Ireland's **That Petrol Emotion** has been postponed... According to the the latest **Neon Rome** gig poster: 'Christ is cum.' The perpetrator of this statement, singer Neal Arbick, was too involved in narcotic investigation when Nerve attempted to coax a more lucid analysis of life out of him... **Eugene Ripper** wants you all to know of his Acoustic Underground show at the Rivoli (Aug 21), intended to 'showcase some of the Acoustic music that is being created on the Streets of Toronto'. The widely misunderstood rock personality known as The Minimalist Jug Band will be attending with his Big Band and Hep Rhythms... fans of schlock movies will be pleased (or disgusted) to hear of the B-Festival, a collection of bad movies to be screened at The Big Bop danceteria on Queen and Bathurst (Sept. 4-13). Such sure-fire tax right-offs as *Cannibal Girls* (with a young Andrea Martin and Eugene Levy from SCTV), *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, *Red Menace: The Commies Are Coming!*, and *Hell Riders* (starring Adam Batman West!), will be featured, as well as a collection of bad music videos... on a more sinister note: some large stuffed animals used as props for the Garbage men shows at The Cameron House have disappeared. "Them damn critters just up and split," said a befuddled Cameron spokesman. The animals are believed to be armed and should be considered extremely dangerous, especially the purple giraffe and the Happy Frog, both of whom were crack terrorists prior to their employment at the Cameron. Call Police or the Cameron if you see any furtive, suspicious looking stuffed animals in your area.

MAKING ANDY WARHOL UP-TIGHT

If you had been in New York City in February 1966, you would have been one thousand people who received this flyer in the mail.



Popism?

The above illustration is of a poster promoting Andy Warhol's multi-media UPTIGHT show, one of the first performances of art terrorists **The Velvet Underground**, a seminal 'psychedelic rock' band who advocated the use of hard drugs and sexual perversity. The Velvet Underground disbanded years ago, but their legacy of excess and crudity lives on...right here in Toronto! Pictured below is a poster advertising local band **The Up Tight**, who cover Velvet Underground filth such as 'Heroin,' 'Black Angel Death Cult,' 'Waiting For A Fix' and 'I'm Loaded'. Playing at opium den near you.

THE UP TIGHT

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THỦ BẦY lúc 8:30 P.M.

28-6-1986

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Thursday Aug 21:
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Thursday Aug 7:
TOBY SWANN & GAMMA GAMMA
 Special Guests: THE ELECTRIC FIRE BROTHERS
 A Razzle Dazzle Dance party. Bring your maracas, tamborines, drumsticks
 Make the Diamond dance (tkts \$5)

Monday Aug 25:
SWING '86 presented by: AZUMUVE
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 Tkts \$7 at Starsound, Atomic Age, Diva Hair & the Diamond

Monday Aug 11:
 from London England: **PSYCHIC T.V.**
 Presented by Elliott Lefko, The Garys & CKLN
 A Multi-media experience, complete with 25 T.V. monitors (tkts \$10)

Thursday Aug 28:
L.A. PRODUCTIONS—LONG WEEKEND BASH No. 5
 (tkts \$6)

Tuesday Aug 12:
JATO (Jet Assisted Take Off)
 Blasting in from the West....Special guests: RED ALERT (tkts \$5)

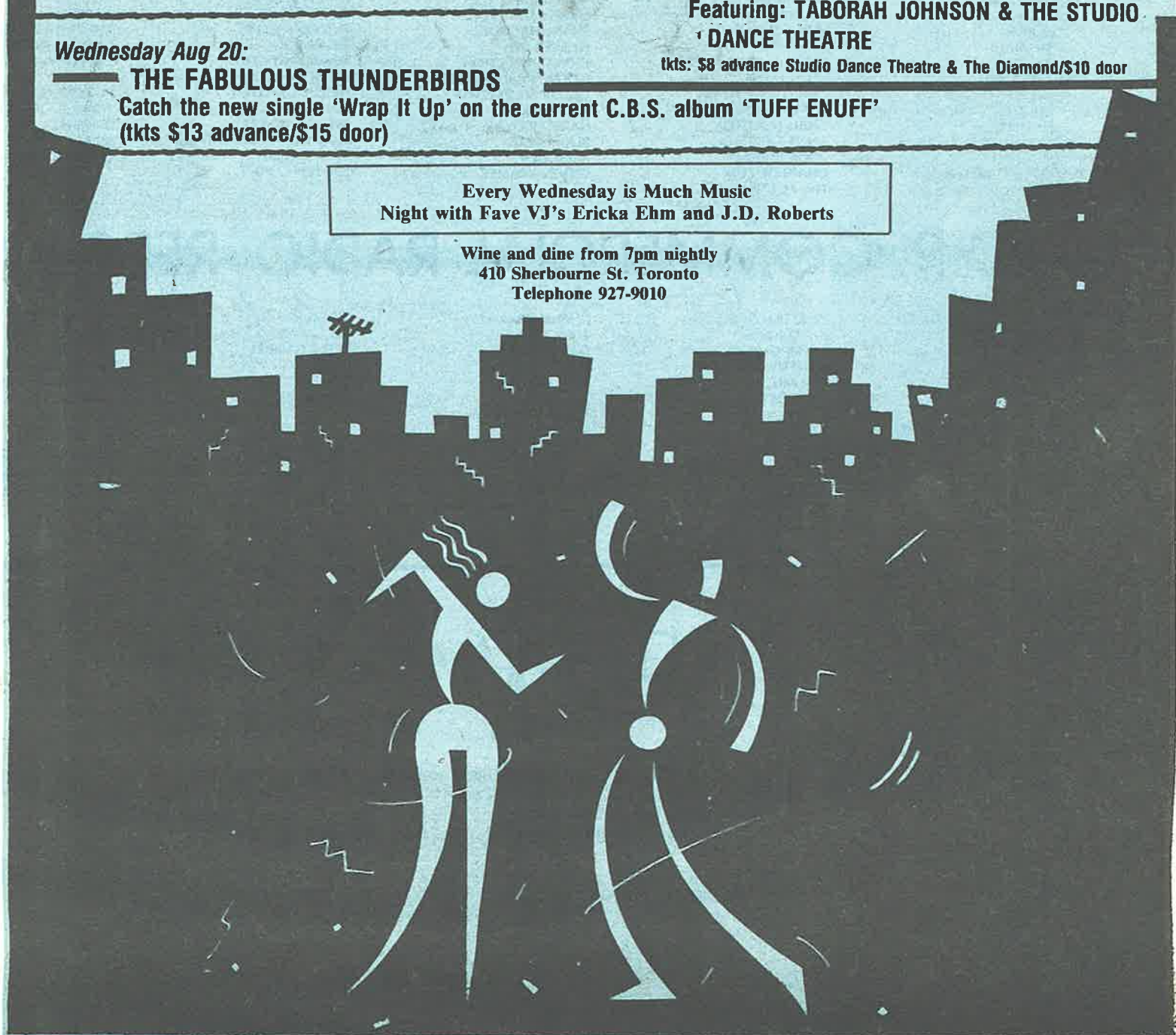
Thursday Aug 14:
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 "Rock'n'roll that matters!" (\$4)

Tuesday Aug 26:
PRIMITIVE DESIRE II...presented by Al Green & George C. Randolph
AN EVENING OF SONG AND DANCE
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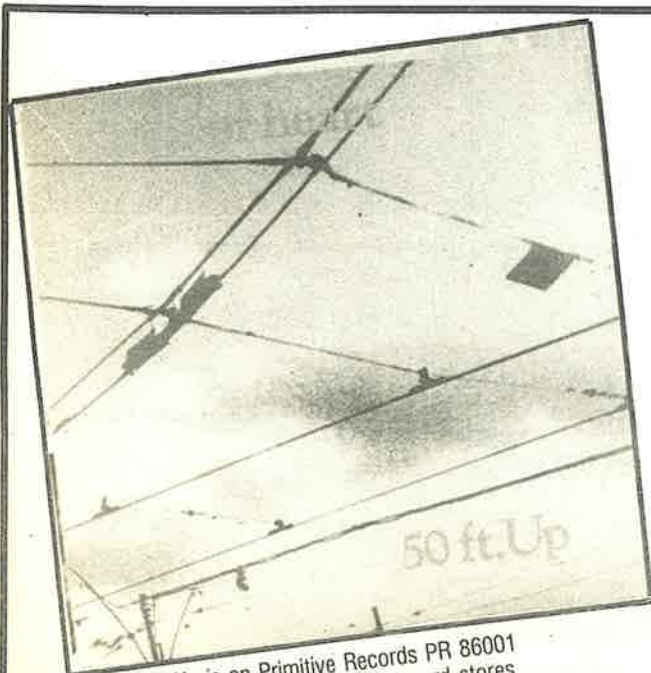
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Change of Heart is a powerful Toronto band that's finally breaking through. The band's been in existence for four years, but the wait for the new debut album, 50 Ft. Up, was well worth it—it's a tough but subtle record that doesn't pull punches. *Nerve!* paid tribute to its "Transfigured dynamics." All the songs are by the band's four members, Mike Armstrong, Ian Blurton, Ron Duffy and Rob Taylor. Like so many other independent songwriters across the country, they're all members of CAPAC.

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WEB

ALTERNATIVE RADIO TOP 60

THE WEB Alternative Radio Top 60 information is based on playlists from reporting canadian Campus and Community radio stations. Statistics are compiled from point totals tabulated on playlist positions of artists, then multiplied by station classification factor

Aug 4	2 wks ago	4 wks ago	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL	WEEKS ON	PEAK
1	1	1	● BREEDING GROUND	Tales of Adventure	—Fringe	1	8
2	3	6	○ CHANGE OF HEART	50 FT UP	—Primitive	2	8
3	20	-	● SCOTT MERRITT	Gravity Is Mutual	—Duke St.	3	2
4	2	3	○ CHRIS HOUSTON	Hate Filled Man	—Caucasian/Zulu	2	6
5	6	8	○ SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET	Wow Flutter Hiss '86	—Jet Pack	5	6
6	4	12	PETER GABRIEL	So	—WEA	4	6
7	5	12	SIUXSIE & THE BANSHEES	Tinderbox	—Polygram	4	6
8	14	50	SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS	Gun Shy	—WEA	8	4
9	7	17	POGUES	Poguetry In Motion	—Stiff/WEA	7	8
10	-	-	● SMITHS	The Queen Is Dead	—WEA	8	-
11	12	16	BUTTHOLE SURFERS	Rembrandt Pussy Horse	—Touch & Go	13	6
12	29	-	● 54-40	54-40	—WEA	5	2
13	22	5	RAMONES	Animal Boy	—WEA	12	6
14	13	58	BIG BLACK	Atomizer	—Polution	11	4
15	8	20	○ CHALK CIRCLE	The Great Lake	—Duke Street	10	8
16	31	32	WOLFGANG PRESS	The Legendary Wolfgang Press	—Polygram	16	4
17	10	23	○ LOOK PEOPLE	Stop Making Cheeze	—Amok	10	4
18	11	10	MEAT PUPPETS	Out My Way	—SST	10	6
19	54	-	○ SEVERED HEADS	Come Visit The Big Biggot	—Nettwerk	19	2
20	16	4	LOU REED	Mistrial	—RCA	4	8
21	41	44	○ SCREAMING BAMBOO	Break These Chains	—Dad's Favorite	21	6
22	15	15	○ M plus M	The World Is A Ball	—RCA	9	8
23	44	35	○ MIND ALTERING DEVICES	To Touch The Face Of God	—Transmission	23	4
24	17	24	THE THREE JOHNS	The World By Storm	—Abstract	17	4
25	33	30	SONIC YOUTH	Evol	—SST	25	4
26	18	49	○ DAVE HOWARD SINGERS	Goodnight Karl Malden	—Grip	26	4
27	19	42	BODEANS	Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams	—WEA	19	4
28	25	34	CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN	II & III	—Rough Trade	25	4
29	21	53	FUZZTONES	Lysergic Emanations	—Enigma	21	6
30	23	57	JOHN CALE	Artificial Intelligence	—Polygram	23	4
31	24	21	ART OF NOISE	In Visible Silence	—MCA	6	10
32	26	-	ROY BUCHANAN	Dancin On The Edge	—Alligator/WEA	-	-
33	27	-	MOJO NIXON/SKID ROPER	Frenzy	—Enigma	27	2
34	28	14	JONATHAN RICHMAN	It's Time For Jonathan Richman	—WEA	14	6
35	55	-	THE NAILS	Dangerous Dreams	—RCA	35	2
36	32	-	PETER GORDON	Innocent	—CBS	32	2
37	30	-	THE POGUES	Rum Sodomy & The Lash	—MCA	30	2
38	52	-	○ NILS	The Nils	—Seigried	38	2
39	34	13	VIOLENT FEMMES	The Blind Leading the Naked	—WEA	1	20
40	34	28	LAURIE ANDERSON	Home of The Brave	—WEA	3	10
41	36	18	○ VELVETEENS	Tall Houses	—Ransom	8	12
42	37	25	JACOBITES	The Ragged School	—TwinTone	25	6
43	38	19	COCTEAU TWINS	Victoria Land	—4AD	19	6
44	40	-	CHRISTY MOORE	Ride On	—Green Linnett	40	2
45	-	60	○ YOUNG LIONS	Welcome To The Freak Show	—Yodel Gems	45	-
46	39	29	MINISTRY	Twitch	—WEA	20	14
47	42	43	○ RHYTHM MISSION	Wild Mood Swings	—MoDaMu	4	16
48	43	-	CHESTERFIELD KINGS	Stop!	—Mirrofus	-	-
49	-	38	RED GUITARS	Tales of The Expected	—Virgin	38	-
50	-	-	JAZZ BUTCHER	Bloody Nonsense	—Polygram	50	-
51	45	-	HASIL ADKINS	Hazes House Party	—Norton	45	2
52	-	-	CHRIS & COSEY	Take Five	—Nettwerk	52	-
53	-	-	○ GARNET ROGERS	The Outside Track	—Valerie	53	-
54	46	-	○ SHUFFLE DEMONS	Streetniks	—Stubby	46	2
55	47	55	THAT PETROL EMOTION	Manic Pop Thrill	—Demon	55	4
56	-	-	SWANS	Time Is Money (Bastard)	—Jem	56	-
57	56	48	TEST DEPT.	The Unacceptable Face of Freedom	—Some Bizarre	22	10
58	51	-	○ VARIOUS	Ultimatum	—Psyche Industry	51	2
59	-	31	○ COLIN LINDEN	The Immortals	—Stoney Plain	31	4
60	-	-	RESIDENTS	Kaw Liga	—Ralph	60	-

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Hammer happenings

Hello...The vacation was great and we all had a good time, but it's BACK TO WORK NOW!

...Tom Wilson of **Florida Razor** fame (not the producer of 'Freak Out,' 'Bringing it All Back Home' etc.) met YOKO ONO in Strawberry Fields whilst on vacation in the Big Apple recently, and reports that the band is picking up campus support in the Northeastern states. In the meantime, the Razors continue to slug through a slew of squalid drinking troughs, and still plan to release the 'Kings of Clang' LP in the fall.

The Trouble Boys continue to work on re-recording the album *B-R-A-I-N Scurvy* and have been making themselves visible in the Toronto area. Recently manager Pat Gibbons visited L.A. to combine business with pleasure, (with the latter admittedly taking up the better part of the trip), and says that the T-Boys will be making more and more jaunts down south. "They like rock'n'roll down there" says blood bro' and band leader Tim Gibbons.

I'm going to quote Dave Ross, President of the Hamilton Cultural Appreciation Society, from a recent issue of *Style*:

"**The Mean Red Spiders** are the sound of a finely tuned Harley squashing David Bowie's head."

I think that remains the definitive analysis of the Hammers' latest musical aggro-gation, which features former Millionaire Brian 'Slash Booze' Baird on guitar. Slash is one of the pivotal figures in the Hamilton rock'n'roll scene and is frequently credited as "Inspiration" by area musicians, probably due to the amount of beer he has dispensed over the years. Congrats go out to Slash on the birth of his son Matthew.

Mickey DeSadist, he of **Forgotten Rebels** fame, has undertaken a solo career of sorts by opening for various bands down in the U.S. "They pay an amazing amount of money for opening acts down there" says the Mick, who recently opened for his own band (what a concept!). Longtime followers of Rebel activity, including Gary Topp, have encouraged Mickey to pursue a solo career and rumours of solo tapes/record deals should start circulating in this column in the next issue.

On the new music front, **Altogether Morris** opened for **Vital Sines** and **Handsome Ned** recently and are planning to release a full LP in the fall. The LP is rumoured to be financed by various band members moonlighting as human guinea pigs at the local research centre...the band will also be involved in a compilation LP of local new music groups entitled "Noise Next Door." More tales from the riverbank as they happen.

The Progressive Minstrels have disbanded and leader Paul Reynolds is in the process of forming a new group with a considerably different sound.

The Dick Van Dykes have had more than their usual share of attention, what with What Wave benefits, Art Show openings (imagine sharing a billing with Sheila Copps...boggles the mind) and smash hit demo recordings (No. 1 at CFMU). Still the band has run into problems, most disturbing being that of their 'image.' Recently the *Hamilton Spectator* and *Style* described the band as an "art-rock" outfit due to the two BACK UP singers and art school connections. For those of you who haven't caught this act yet, be advised that, unless camp tackiness becomes an established School of Art, this beat combo doesn't go anywhere near the realm of Art. They're from the School of Cramps/Deja VooDoo Musical Butchery (and I use that term in a complimentary way). As far as who's in charge, all the band told me was "Sarah Who?"

Majority of One have resurfaced, and opened for **Breeding Ground** recently. Basically they have a Doors/Killing Joke "Goth" sound with lead orator Rob

Tratch supplying caustic remarks between on-going bouts of catharsis. You get the picture.

The Mean Red Spiders, **The Purple Toads** (a criminally underrated Oshawa group) and the now legendary **Moon Crickets** will be playing Club 67 Aug. 8. Tickets available from hipper Hammer music hang-outs. *Nerve* will be there (they should be anyways) along with sundry CFMU personalities. The Crickets are confident going into their first headlining gig. Says Fearless Leader D.L. Lee "We'll have guys banging nails into their heads (note: see inner sleeve of 'Rocket

to Russia' for reference), and women taking their clothes off. That's how good we are."

And finally, I caught a couple of recent **Frank Venom & the Vipers** gigs. Nice choice of covers (Lee Micheals, Steel River), and a sound which swings like Joe 90 in a rockabilly groove.

N'that's all she wrote...I'm sending your saddle home.

P.S. Watch for the **Throbs Proud to be Loud** EP in your stores by the time you read this.

B.F. Mole Mowal

Kirkland Lake

Once every couple of months, I put on my dark sunglasses and take the pick-up down to Sudbury to check out the new records. Kirkland Lake, my home for 10 years now, lacks an establishment that stocks anything more blood-bracing than **Mrs. Mills** back-catalogue or the dance remix of **The Rovers** 'Wasn't That A Party?' As I sift through the racks, looking in vain for a **Delanie and Bonnie** reunion album, deliberately avoiding re-issues of my old band's (embarrassing) work, I start hearing the Kirkland jokes. You know: "Hey man, wanna pick up a six and drive up to Kirkland Lake for the weekend? Hear they've got a new crack in the asphalt!"

Ha ha ha. Regardless, thanks to a friend of mine at *Nerve* (who shall remain nameless, as he needs the publicity as much as I do) I've been given this opportunity to blow open this snotty, urban prejudice towards my adopted home. (Let me tell you, the Paris thing still gives me a good laugh, almost as much as Ray's work with that fey bunch of L.A. cowpunks.)

For a start, Kirkland Lake is probably the best place to see a **Bachman Turner Overdrive** cover band; we have 17. Every spring a major beer company sponsors an outdoor festival—"Overdrive Live"—featuring that year's crop of Randy Bachman impersonators. Next year, we plan to shift the festival to late summer to catch the pike-fishing crowds that fill the town.

The immediate environs of this town boast more folk artists per square mile than some parts of the Appalachians. Unfortunately, the incest rate runs on a pretty competitive scale as well. Sitting on the shore in the evening, cleaning the day's catch, you'll find yourself serenaded by locals braying out the old songs, handed down from generations past, like "I'd go into town more often if'n sis didn't look so good tonight" or "Paw, the pigs just et the baby."

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Maggot Fodder Sudden Death

Guelph has choked up some loud, terminally stupid bands in the past—the enigmatic Enemas to name but 10—and Maggot Fodder are probably Guelph's claim to a punk rock extrapolation scene. *Sudden Death* starts with typical turgidity; the title track instrumental wall-of-dirge is not unlike Killing Joke. Fodder take the exploratory surgery approach to self-awareness, with no apparent premeditation. 'My Wife' is Cream's *Disraeli Gears* in the rinse cycle, quite like the rest of the tape.

Maggot Fodder are unique in that most of them have first names beginning with the letter 'A'. There's no excuse for them, their art being utterly pointless: Guitar, bass, drums and no tunes. Startlingly monographic guitar halitosis is the big turn-off here; it's drastically unpleasant, weird for weird's sake. It's the Cult on a walkman underwater...it'll be massive!

Mojo Nixon & Skid Roper Frenzy Restless import

The title's direct cop from Screamin' Jay Hawkins' debut album allows Mojo and Skid the poetic licence to speed through the stinkiest back alleys of Amurika. Mojo is as insane an individual as has ever been recorded, sort of a slovenly Yank John Otway, and his gutbucket 'blues' is instant, classic Trash.

His version of 'Inna Gadda Davida,' with its cardboard box drum solo, lays waste to the entire foundation and ideology of 60s 'cool.' Then there's 'I Got No Boss,' 'Feeling Existential,' 'I Hate Banks' and 'Where The Hell's My Money'—brilliantly succinct tales of the American human condition and dietary habits.

Take a '23 Mile Ride,' a wild polka-cajun thingameedoodle wotzit that expells the moss from the surface of your tongue. Then marvel at the pathetic attempt at human beatbox gymnastics on 'Stuffin' Martha's Muffin,' an archival rock 'n roll moment. There's lots of snappy, cool tunes here, great economo-trash effects like broomhandle bass, shitty cymbals and an old-time cash register bell, and Mojo's voice—recalling the great Captain Beefheart, George Thurogood, and Lux Interior—keeps everything out of line, out to lunch, sham-bolic and beautiful. A great tape.

Fools Crow Fools Crow

They'll enjoy this in Hamilton.

JR and the Z-Man Several Times A Day

This cassette comes to us courtesy of Mad-Man Music in sunny Hollywood, with an excellent facsimile of an American \$5 bill that fooled the lady at the Slurpee counter. Their publishing company is U-Betcha Music.

Are JJ and the Snooze Men happenin' dudes? You betcha! They should be on, like, A&M Records and do a tour with, like, Split Enz and go to parties with, like, Tom Hanks. The music is pretty standard Yankee post-punk pop perm-wave protest. Rush meets The Police and they both lose.

Semi Detached Antenna self titled

Seventeen very droll, vaguely appealing songs in a semi-detached perspective. The work of Kevin McAvoy "and nobody else...playing voice, mandolin, guitar, keyboards, flute, egg slicer, biscuit tins and coffee table," this highly eccentric, semi-cohesive music centres on the inanity of semi-detached urban existence, like on the subtly amusing 'Drink Again,' 'Possessions' and 'A Good Time' and the stark, strange 'Blow Out.'

McAvoy is overtly disinterested in rhythm overload, and the style is often indulgent and redundant, as on 'The One Note.' The music on *Semi Detached Antenna* is primarily mellow, minimal electronic chords over which much tinkering is done, which unfortunately sounds like a solo album from somebody in Supertramp. But it's redeemed by some genuine innovation: 'Stay Around' sounds like Syd Barret turning onto electronic toys, and he actually cries in the incredible track 'Future.'

Some of it's too far gone—I'm not sure machines were designed to sound like this—and the majority of the cassette consists of portions of songs, like he's afraid to exploit the impulse completely ('Slide,' 'Drive'). But his voice is intriguing (very English, like Roy Harper or Peter Hamill) and the tape has the same surreal, 'an hour in the life of...' quality as *Compass—KumPas*, the excellent Dalek I album.

Verdict is 'conductive.'

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DRASTIC PLASTIC

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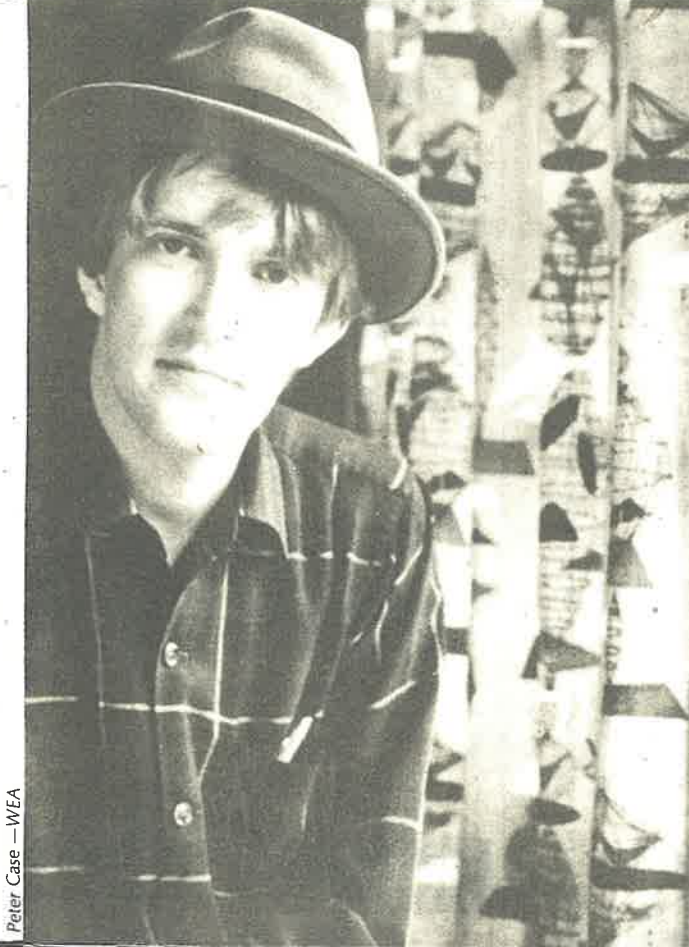
Peter Case
Peter Case
 WEA

In this day and age, with most records going the way of either Next-Big-Thing hype or instant disappearance, it's encouraging to see a modest effort like Peter Case break through the cracks.

Case, who was in The Plimsouls for six years, took to the road for a few more after their demise. Judging from this disc, he spent this time polishing his songwriting craft.

He also became something of a musical schizophrenic. About half the songs on this album are slick, thoughtful pop tunes in a Johnny Cougar Americana vein. 'Horse & Crow,' about a pair of young lovers who've lost their way (and maybe each other), could have appeared on Mellencamp's last effort; 'Satellite Beach,' though it deals with the decay of the Union and the shuttle accident, has that slick, radio-friendly feel.

The other half of the songs are in a more traditional folk style, and really make the record shine. 'Small Town Spree,' with strings courtesy of American genius Van Dyke Parks, has a southern antebellum feel; 'Walk in the Woods' is an acoustic tale of mystery and loss with a stringing harmonica; 'Icewater' is a concise slice of Lightnin' Hopkins with a four-verse sketch of desire gone awry; and Case covers the Pogues' 'Pair of



Peter Case —WEA

Brown Eyes,' with former Byrd Roger McGuinn doing with his 12-string what he did way back when for 'Wild Mountain Thyme.'

The songs are haunted by loss. When I asked Case about this, he said he was trying to make connections between the optimism of the 60s and the vacuum of the 80s.

That sheds new light on the album as a whole. 'Echo Wars' becomes a metaphor for the way events from the past affect those of today; 'Steel Strings' mourns the passing of rock'n'roll heroes from that time; 'I Shook His Hand,' a gospel-ish rave-up, which I thought was about a preacher, turns out to have been written for John F. Kennedy; 'Walk in the Woods,' which has the same sense of ominous incident as 'Ode to Billy Joe,' is about getting lost and never coming back; and 'Horse & Crow' becomes a metaphor for the evaporation of the earlier decade's spirit.

But that's just one of the things the disc is about. Case's songs open up more with each successive listening, which is the mark of a good songwriter. He blows a mean harp and picks a pretty wicked guitar, too. The album won't turn your knees to jello and your toes to cupcakes, but it will provide many hours of thoughtful listening pleasure.

In fact, I'll call it the sleeper of the year, so far.

Howard Druckman

That Petrol Emotion
Manic Pop Thrill
 Demon Import
The Mekons
The Edge of the World
 Sin Import
The Woodentops
Giant
 Rough Trade Import

Dear Ravenstein, our inscrutable editor here at Nerve, has often found himself the sole Anglophiliac at our semi-stuporous staff meetings here in the illegal kingdom of Nerve. Cornered by Herr Druckman, who would rather hear a suburban cowboy sing in considered but authentic drawl any old day, and Phil "King of Rock" Dellio, who just can't understand a word those soggy fish-fryers sing, you have to sympathize with Rave as a man persecuted. With these three releases, obtainable upon negotiating a small mortgage at your local import shop, I may find myself sticking up for the old man next time he falls into bad company.

That Petrol Emotion features Sean and Damian O'Neill, the brothers who were responsible for the irresistible pop of the Undertones. Never has a record's title described more eloquently the vinyl within. The group's debut album is comprised of pop music that grabs your ear like well-aimed fish-hooks. Guitars grind and scrape like all the cheap strings of '77 and '78 boiled down to a lethal essence. Songs, choruses and melodies take you for a harrowing ride up and down the barbed wire and blasted-rock wills of Derry, Ulster and Belfast. Simply unbelievable.

The Mekons are a small-scale orchestra of old punks sawing away on fiddles, mandolins, accordions, acoustics and the odd grungy electric thrown in out of habit. This album continues their appropriation of American Country and Western and Brit folk musics to their own degenerate ends. Songs drag their way to weary but inspired choruses after taking you on a tour of English post-industrial, welfare-state urban deep depression. 'Down in the Basement,' Jon Langford (one of The Three Johns) sings, "the ugly band plays, tired of their music and picking their teeth." In a dank, stinking pub, littered with puke, sawdust, broken fingernails and broken glass, the Mekons find their home, not sure of just why they keep going, but willing to keep beating at the beast, and besides, someone will always buy you a pint there.

The Woodentops are the flipside of the Mekons coin. Indescribably joyful where the Mekons are unbelievably depressed, this small band create a wall of sound that often sounds like a caliope competing with a busker's convention in a marble hall. Led by one Rolo McGinty, the Woodentops sing about gleeful, beaming, screaming joy, operatic optimism in the face of mundanity. Their album is, I'm happy to say, as good as their string of indie singles promised. Lend your cynicism to the Mekons for the weekend and bounce around like a damned fool to the Woodentops. This one might go domestic soon, so this modest ticket to a fool's paradise might be cheaper than it was for me. Until then, think nice thoughts, and if all that fails, get blind stinking drunk.

Rick McGinnis

Hanging Out At Midnight
 Midnight

The underlying attitude which governs Midnight Records (or Bomp, etc.) is at once admirable and foreign to me. These labels are run by people who sincerely love rock'n'roll, who invest money—with little realistic chance of recouping it—in a lot of unknown bands to recreate what they love about it. Who can argue with that?—particularly in the face of all the crap the majors cynically shove onto the market.

Unfortunately, these noble intentions are usually circumscribed by a deadly case of tunnelvision. Whatever genre they choose to champion (garage, surf, rockabilly), they end up stifling themselves through the sameness and oppressive earnestness of their performers. One gets the feeling that if one of these labels ever lucked into someone truly innovative, they'd be at a loss what to do with them.

As might be expected, this compilation of Midnight bands reflects both sides of the equation. Much of what's here is nothing more than garage-by-numbers—more like a guided museum tour through 1966 than 1966 itself. Maybe one night I'll get drunk with the Cheeze and Cracker guy, and get him to explain these songs to me.

But the love I spoke of earlier finds its way through. Three songs particularly interest me—not so surprisingly, three that acknowledge life as we live it here and now. The Cavemen's 'Labour Day' filters its three chords through a recognizable, early-eighties revisionist influence—the recently resurfaced Feelies. 'Radio Girl,' by the Love Pushers, is a deceptively bouncy singalong until you get to the lyrics: "always saw you, half-past ten/back to the row for some R.E.M./at the station by a quarter-to-two/then it's high time for lunch with Husker Du." And although I can't believe I'm saying this, my favorite is by some outfit known as the Woofing Cookies. Their 'Girl Next Door' takes wide-eyed teen romance almost to the point of feminism: "cause she's older than me/and she's smarter than

The Velvet Underground
Another View
 Polygram

By now, everybody's read that the Velvet Underground were the greatest and most influential thingamabob in the entire whatsis of blablablah, so I'll spare you the lecture.

Examined on the music alone, this album is for crazed completists only. They're finally scraping the bottom of the Velvets barrel, with a collection of out-takes, oddities, alternative versions and instrumentals. It ends up being the one thing the Velvets never, ever were: Boring.

The editors here don't like it when we scribes do a track-by-track analysis of the disc. In this case, when each track was picked specifically for the record from the many available in the vaults, I think such an approach is best. Besides, rock'n'roll bands ultimately stand or fall on their songs, nothing more.

'We're Gonna Have A Real Good Time Together' has already appeared on the Velvets double-live 1969 album and on Lou Reed's own *Street Hassle*. This is the best version, with clear harmonies and crisp, classically Velvet chunka-chunka guitar. It's tremendously stupid. I wish this brand of intentional stupidity could replace Madonna's brand of it today.

The instrumental 'I'm Gonna Move Right In' starts promisingly; it's a mid-tempo percolator, with guitarist Sterling Morrison displaying a naive skill that draws on blues as it anticipates Tom Verlaine. But the tune just piddles along, and gets tired very quickly.

'Hey Mr. Rain (I)' is the Velvets at their best. Dark, quiet, moody, sinister, it has a minor-key viola (by John Cale) playing against major-key guitar chords (by Lou). The viola does a nice little upward hop at the end of each stanza. This is one of the scariest songs the band ever did, and the only essential track here.

'Ride Into The Sun' is another instrumental. Morrison does some subtle, tasteful leadwork, and there's a gently distorted guitar, but it's music to fall asleep by. It sounds like late-night Italian movie background music.

'Coney Island Steeplechase' sounds like Lou's revenge on his home turf. It has good radio-distorted vocals up front, but degenerates into campy nonsense by the end.

'Guess I'm Falling In Love' is yet another instrumental. It starts loud, hard, and grungy a la 'Sister Ray,' but ultimately ends up as pure pounding without a vocal. One part sounds just like the riff of 'God Save the Queen.'

'Hey Mr. Rain (II)' is the same as the first version, except Lou sings more Dylan-ish, the viola gets a bit wilder, and there's some LOUD distorted-guitar chords instead of a lead.

'Ferryboat Bill' is a swirl of angular guitar licks and Doors-style organ, and weird Letterman-type harmonies. It has an appealingly tossed-off feel and dry production. Like 'Story of My Life,' it's essentially a repeated joke.

'Rock and Roll' is a great song, but the version on 'Loaded' cuts this one to ribbons. The vocal, the leads, and everything else is better on the 'Loaded' version.

If you've never heard the Velvets, this won't explain the fuss. I suggest their first album instead.

Howard Druckman

me/and she's taller than me/and that's how it should be." Point of interest—the Cookies are produced by Peter Buck.

These three bands all have their own albums out that are probably worth investigating; since the most practical use for samplers is to tape your favorite tracks, so too, despite my reservations, is *Hanging Out at Midnight*.

Phillip Dellio



Woodentops —WEA



George Clinton
R&B Skeletons in the Closet
Parliament-Funkadelic
The Mothership Connection
Live From Houston
 Capitol

If James Brown is the King of Soul, George Clinton—mastermind behind Parliament-Funkadelic, Bootsy's Rubber Band, The Brides of Funkenstein, Jimmy G and the Tackheads, the P-Funk All-Stars, and lately his own solo career—is the Clown Prince. Blessed with a wicked and scatological sense of a humour and a divining rod's sense of a groove, Clinton has been producing the most hilarious, socially adept, and ass-grabbing funk around for nearly twenty years.

His new solo album sets its sights, on the plethora of cross-over black artists coating the airwaves with sticky, over-refined, and certainly soulless songs. Pulling in Venessa Williams for a guest shot on 'Hey Good Lookin',' perhaps the slyest crossover joke imaginable, Clinton proves to be as puckish as ever. But the album, while good by anyone else's standards, is pedestrian Clinton. The man can pull this off while pressing his doo-rag and tapping on the drum machine with a big toe.

The Mothership Connection is six excerpts from a videotape of P-Funk's epic theatrical funk acid-minstrel show of the late seventies. Better in sound quality than an earlier live album of that tour, it's nonetheless a juicy sampling of the grande funke that might prove too rich for the beginner. Side two, featuring three cuts from Clinton's previous two solo albums, is a fine introduction to George alone, featuring the computer-funk hit 'Atomic Dog' and the unbelievably intense 'Double Oh-Oh'.

A little note, just for context's sake. A younger generation of black fans has found little to funk around with in P-Funk, finding Clinton a bit too hard to reach. His greatest fans are now in their late 20s and 30s, and the most vociferous of them seem to be white critics. What the funk will George have to do next? Will his cleverness do him in? Stay tuned.

Rick McGinnis

Van Morrison
No Guru, No Method, No Teacher
 Mercury
Ray Charles
From the Pages of My Mind
 Columbia

On the first track on his latest album, Van Morrison sings about his childhood, rushing home to listen to Brother Ray sing. As pupil and master both have new releases at the same time, it seemed suitable to review them together.

Van Morrison has for years been creating his alchemical blend of folk, jazz, gospel soul and Celtic music, and on the way has released albums of varying quality, though usually woven from the same fabric. When he's been good, he's produced songs like 'Brown-Eyed Girl,' 'Moondance,' and 'Crazy Love,' and albums like Astral Weeks, which contains no hit singles, but stands as one of the greatest albums of the last decade: a gently flowing, soulful, and unclassifiable album worth hearing at the best and worst of times. His last album, Sense of Wonder, saw Morrison bring his gospel flavourings to the front, with varied success. This album is, to make a grand statement, almost as good as Astral Weeks. Songs drift in and out, building and rising so flawlessly that song titles are almost unnecessary. Morrison is hardly innovating with his career, but I don't think that's his point. An often elliptical mystic who has never seemed comfortable with this century, populating his songs with often mediaval imagery, he has nonetheless created a body of work to be considered out of context with the time in which it was sung.

Brother Ray, on the other hand, has always had a keen ear for the times. One of his most memorable appearances was on Phil Spector's T.N.T. Show, alongside the Ronnettes, the Byrds and the Lovin' Spoonful. This grandfatherly pioneer of Rhythm and Blues wailed and blasted his band through a short set that made the youngsters look positively lame (with the exception of Ike and Tina Turner, whose

performance owned more than a little to the tutoring of the Master).

Like Otis Redding, Solomon Burke, and Al Green, Ray has always had an overt country bent, and From the Pages of My Mind is hardly Ray's first flirtation with the genre. Cut with Nashville session musicians, the album is, sad to say, as lifeless as most of what passes for mainstream country and western these days, with Ray's husky, pleading bellows of a voice making only a few rough scratches on the milquetoast backing tracks. For the moment, the disciple is outshining the master.

Rick McGinnis

Blue In Heaven
Explicit Material
 Island

These guys sound a lot like someone else. Don't know who; it's kind of punk with nice production, straining "Don't go baby" vocals, a big backbeat, raunchy geetars, the whole schmeer. Explicit Material suffers mainly from a knowing sound of genericism.

A four-man band with two guitars and keyboards, Blue In Heaven is energetic, and occasionally even a little adventurous. Dave, Declan, Shane & Eamonn (wonder from whence they hail?) can really kick when they want to, as on 'Rolling with the Crowd' and 'Sister,' and they know when to stretch out and go for melodic breaks. This probably has to do with the production by Island head Chris Blackwell, who lends Material a clean, obvious sound. Sole singer Shane charges the tunes with a pleasant drawl that quickly roars upon command, and there's room to spare for the others. The problem here is the rather ordinary lyrics: "Tell me that you love me" repeated ad nauseum, "Baby I'll be your man", etc. Not very explicit material. But...

But overall Blue In Heaven gets thumbs up, mainly for uncontrollable enthusiasm and enough talent to sustain it on record. They are good; if only they didn't sound so much like...

Kyle Swanson

R.E.M.
Lifes Rich Pageant
 I.R.S.

The inability to appreciate something for what it is, rather than what we perceive it to be, is a human failing that intrudes on our lives every day. Racism is an obvious by-product of misperception; so are jealousy, distrust, and a thousand other little uglinesses we all fall prey to.

Misperception is also an unfortunate component of personal aesthetics. Instead of listening to an album (or watching a film, etc.) and simply hearing it, we instinctively let peripheral bits of knowledge and conjecture seep in—so-and-so loves this and he's an idiot; they're getting the attention my favorite band should be; I dread how their cult's going to embrace this. I'm guilty of unfounded biases, so is everyone on this paper, and so are you.

Thus springs elitism, a fine-tuning of one's aesthetic response that essentially has no basis in fact. Granted, elitism is the price one often pays in the

struggle for individuality; but as a revealing paradox, it is also a mirror of mindless acceptance. The indiscriminate fan of top-30 uses success to validate an album's/song's existence—at any given moment, there will be uniform enjoyment of the top ten regardless of merit, style, etc. Absurd linearity, but no more so than the elitist who distrusts and resists success. Neither person is addressing the thing for what it is.

Squarely in the middle of elitism, misperception, and every other complexity of mass/mass-cult success, stands R.E.M. They are perhaps the one band in the eighties with a legitimate chance to cut across the entire pop audience—mainstream, fringe, college; the whole spectrum. Clearly, they never will. Although they've gained a foothold on radio, their appeal will remain too oblique to really make a dent; even more disturbing, a large segment of the fringe audience—people who should know better—actively loathe them. Their resentment, I'm convinced, has little to do with R.E.M.'s music as music.

When Henry Rollins speaks of "the R.E.M. Syndrome," he's being very quotable, but equally empty-headed. Similarly, derisive putdowns of bands as R.E.M. soundalikes are vague enough as to be meaningless. However, both cliches have had their cumulative effect. Other factors contribute: distaste for Michael Stipe's aloofness, awkwardness, and effeminacy; frustration over the band's insistence on half-sketched, aphoristic narratives; the meticulous care that is invested into each album, enough to drive some people away immediately. Bothered as much by what R.E.M. are not as by what they are, their critics have constructed a noose made out of string.

Well, fuck them. What R.E.M. are is one of the half-dozen or so greatest bands America has ever given us, a status that Lifes Rich Pageant does nothing to dispell. They keep topping themselves, and as per usual I can listen to nothing else right now.

Like its predecessors, Pageant turns inward; seals itself off, suspends everything grand about it just out of

reach. An R.E.M. album invariably runs the risk of dying after a single listen. None do, because second time around you're already noticing a phrase here and there—"silence means security/silence means approval"—which may hold meaning, may be strictly decorative, but seems deeply felt either way. The emotional pull of these images in turn unlocks the music, the pleasures of which are equally ephemeral, yet just as substantial; Peter Buck and Bill Berry continue to test the limits of what they think a wall of sound should sound like (new addition: the rollercoaster keyboards snaking through 'Just a Touch'). Conceptually, the noble sentiments involved in reconstruction are carried over from Fables: "let's begin again," "let's put our heads together and start a new country up," "what if we give it away?" (three different songs). The sum total of all these minor glories is an album rich enough in feeling to hold up after a thousand listens.

Two songs overwhelm immediately, 'Flowers of Guatemala,' an invitation to take a picture of a place where

people are friendly and content, is beautiful enough to be about nothing but beauty itself. It's pretty hard for a background vocalist to make a song his own, but Mike Mills does here. When Ronnee Blakely closed her eyes and sang 'Dues' in Nashville, Pauline Kael was awed by the way Blakely's hands seemed to trace the movement of her voice in the air; the rise and fall of Mill's tenor paints a similar image.

At the other end of the scale, 'Superman' is a throwaway joke—it's credited to "G. Zekley/M. Bottler" of "Teen Bopper Music." Think of 'Paperback Writer' by way of 'I Can See For Miles': shimmering Beatlesque harmony, and a story in which "you don't really love that guy you make it with now do you?/I know you don't love that guy 'cause I can see right through you." They probably had a hard time keeping straight faces, but the result is the friendliest song I've heard since 'Books About UFOs.'

Returning to those who resist R.E.M., remember: forget everything you think you know about them. Begin again, and listen to them.

Phillip Dellio



Robert Smith —WEA

The Cure
Standing On A Beach
 (cassette)
 WEA

One thing's for sure: The Cure are far more popular in 1986 than they would have imagined possible when they penned the 1978 non-hit 'Jumping Someone Else's Train.' They've jumped several trains since then, dabbling in many different forms of perverse pop with the sort of analytical detachment that Bowie based an entire career of theft on.

Yet despite their inclination to disturb the proverbial toupee, their saving grace is the sheer simplicity of the songs themselves. Robert Smith's guitar is always crisp and clear (check the magnificent descending riff of 'Train,' the surreal minimalism of 'Killing an Arab' and 'Forest,' the considered recklessness of 'Primary') and his voice is always, ah, consistent. The Cure have been marketed a lot less effectively as, say, The Bunnymen, New Order, The Smiths (although they share the same fans); because there's an element of wry deliberation about their weirdness, and they've always made a point of being impenetrable.

This predilection they have with experimentation has resulted in a few disastrous singles ('Let's Go To Bed' and 'Caterpillar' are barely tolerable, 'Charlotte Sometimes' is a waste of ears!) but the first one-fifth of this cassette is pure; pure and simple; simple as that.

The late '70s revealed some superb (albiet frequently superfluous) raw imaginations: I speak explicitly of Paul Weller, Julian Cope, McCulloch's Bunnymen, Edwyn Collins for a matter of seconds, and Robert Smith and the Cure made substantial to that (let's be generous) Golden Era Of Pop. As I say (and I say it well), the first five songs on Beach each remind me of my state of minds (plural) at the time when I bought each of them and the second side, as my love slaves assure me, is the first side, only drunk. I'll buy that.

Buy it. The b-sides (on side two of the cassette only) are so disposably experimental, they give away much detail about the structure of this consistently fascinating band. The Cure are always boring us with talk of their reluctance to be absorbed in the mainstream, etc., etc., but this cassette proves their claim to eternal eclecticism.

Dave Rave



REW's Stipe —Buck

Scott Merritt

Gravity Is Mutual

Duke Street Records

The mist hung over the water like cigar smoke on a pool table. The dame was still beside me. We'd been silently staring at the moon over the harbour for an hour. It was too much, too soon, too late, too little. It had to stop.

"Look, kid, here's the simple facts. One, nobody tosses anything of mine, and two, certainly not my new Scott Merritt record. His music has class, talent, and distinction. Not to mention Adrian Belew and David Van Tieghem."

"Has he had twenty-six number one hits, like me?" She did her little pout and thrust her breasts at the world.

"Madonna, I'm not talking about your prefab shock. Merritt is all over you like a boot on a cockroach. His arrangements are superlative, his guitar crisp, his lyrics incisive. He's got Roma Baran, Laurie Anderson's producer. And the band kicks and whispers, from reggae to folk to raunch—a precision team."

"Maybe so, but how many records has he sold? How many people dress like him? Huh?"

I stuck my mug in hers. "Baby, he's got more musical vision and integrity than a million Madonnas. He creates beautiful sounds with his dulcimer, mandolin, and guitar—and it all has soul! Up against him, you're 'Lassie come home with a lobotomy,' to use his phrase."

Suddenly I felt a gat sticking hard in my ribs. The lousy dame had pulled a rod from her panties. Her eyes were cold and calculating, like a simile with no punchline.

"Nobody needs Scott Merritt, honey. So what if he's a great musician and songwriter—the public won't hear him. Can't you see? Madonna rules the airwaves!" She tossed her head and clicked her fangs.

I socked her in the jaw and grabbed the piece. "Know true filth, repulsive sleazequeen!" I shouted, and kicked her into the impossibly polluted cesspool of a harbour. She wouldn't live to tell. As I watched her go down, vainly holding up her pearls as her head gurgled into the scum, I smiled and lit a smoke.

With Madonna gone, I thought, maybe innovators like Merritt will have a chance. Maybe music which reveals new vistas can now enlighten the quality-starved masses, so long spoon-fed by the hype machine. Maybe Gravity Is Mutual will be number one. Maybe Toronto's own Scott Merritt will be truly appreciated.

Somewhere, someone opened a tenement window. George Michael echoed out.

I flicked my butt at the oil-slick of makeup left on the water. The butt hung in the mist.

"Maybe not," I muttered, and strode off into the night. I needed music. With Merritt.

—Kyle Swanson

The Shuffle Demons

Stretniks

Stubby

Like professional wrestling, the Shuffle Demons are, to a degree, made great by the enthusiasm of their fans. So it's fitting that *Stretniks*, the Demons' debut disc, begins with the sound of a real-live Demon (Queen) street party: the roar of the crowd begets the roar of 'The Shuffle Monster'—still out on the street for the first few bars. Then, without missing a beat, in slips the studio-bred 'Shuffle Monster,' minus the 'We are the Shuffle Demons...' chant but with a bridge astutely added.

They're a shrewd bunch, these Demons. In a short time they've gone from pounding the pavement for berets full of loose change to become Toronto's premier bar-hopping, party-assed "jazz combo" (admittedly a field that isn't rife with competition). And in the process, their shaded mugs and Gimi Suits adorned the pages of blue-chip mags like *Toronto* and *Maclean's*. Now the band is out west, and for the next couple of months Toronto will have to turn to *Stretniks* for its Demon fix.

Is the record a worthy substitute for live demonic possession? Of course not, but nor was it expected to be and—to its credit—nor does it try to be.

Instead, it's a good, cross-sectional slice of the Demon's wild but good-natured "crossover" jazz. Even on record, when the horns wail beyond the confines of well-tempered scales (check out Demon Mike's alternately shrieking and farting baritone solo on 'Shuffle Monster' or Demon Rich's James Chance-with-chops sustained alto squeal on 'Out of My House, Roach!') it seems more like an invocation of The Great Party God than a Coltrane exercise in bringing the universe to its knees (no one who sings, "When your only goal is to make it to the toilet bowl/You're The Puker," can be accused of such lofty ambitions).

The Demon's loose exuberance is there throughout *Stretniks*, on the three funky, jokey vocal pieces; on the hep strut of 'The Shuffle Monster'; in the modal exotica of 'Gabi's Gimi Suit,' the refried bop of 'Vitamin K'—even in the slow, collective-improv dirge 'Big Daddy, Fat Boy,' which draws on the funeral music of New Orleans, where we all know when somebody kicks the bucket it ain't nothin' but another excuse for a party.

Tim Powis



Run (l) & DMC —Rick McGinnis

Run-DMC

Raising Hell

Profile

On 1985's "King of Rock" single—a near perfect update of Muddy Water's 'Mannish Boy' and Bo Diddley's 'Bo Diddley'—Run DMC boasted "It's not Michael Jackson/And this is not *Thriller*!" They weren't jumping on any Michael bashing band-wagon with those words; rather they were simply stating their case: to take Michael's crossover sweep further than could be imagined, by uniting the two most committed (hence, stubborn) black and white fans of all—white heavy metal kids and black hip-hop kids. In short, they wanted to take 'crossover' to its ultimate extreme.

Maybe they weren't actually thinking in those terms, but that's exactly what their music—stark, primal beats, accentuated in some cases by loud fuzzy guitars—implied. Yet, as noble as their intentions (or their beats) were, they still remained confined to a rap audience, sparsely populated by white new wave fans and intellectual rock-critics along for the ride.

On *Raising Hell*, the band's third and strongest album, they make their most blatant attempt yet at snagging the metal market with a cover of Aerosmith's 'Walk This Way,' even bringing in the longhaired white boys, Steve Tyler and Joe Perry, to add vocals and guitar, and to ham it up in the video. It's bound to be a smash, thanks in no small part to Perry's salacious riffing, which meshes perfectly with the underlying beat box pattern, sounding as if Aerosmith were custom made for hip-hop all along. Yet although it will make everything else on the radio sound about as hard as Bing Crosby, it's not heavy metal, but rather solid pop. All this means, of course, is that Run-DMC aren't likely to crack that heavy metal market, but instead, a larger, indistinct radio audience. It also means that *Raising Hell* will probably be this year's *Thriller*.

Don't worry, the greatest rock'n'rap'n'rhyme'n'roll band on the planet haven't wimped out; primal beats and fuzzy guitars still abound (and, in fact, are more crushing than ever), and the album closes with

a song called 'Proud To Be Black' which might make whitey a little uneasy (I'm already trying to figure out how to respond when they play it live: clench my fist or hide my white ass?).

But there are small gestures, apart from 'Walk This Way' (it being a rather huge gesture), that suggest a move to the middle ground, whether it's the inclusion of saxophone ('You Be Illin'') and electric piano riffs ('Peter Piper'), or the young-America-identity theme of 'My Adidas' ('We make a mean team/My Adidas and me!'). And with the exception of 'Proud to Be Black' (most def line: "I'm proud to be black, y'all/real brave, y'all/and motherfucker, I can never be a slave, y'all!"), they've toned down their political 'message'-type raps. Their foray into 'socially conscious' lyrics goes about as far as this: "I stepped on stage at Live-Aid/All the people gave and the poor got paid." A little easier for radio programmers to stomach than the dead-level honesty of 'Hard Times' from the self-titled debut, or 'You're Blind' from *King of Rock*.

As with *Thriller* (in which key songs deal with a peculiar paranoia), the politics of *Raising Hell* are of a more personal, reflective nature. The best example of this is 'It's Tricky' which deals with the pressures attached with superstardom (not a premature quibble as these guys have virtually ruled hip-hop for the last two years), particularly the limitations of time. Poor DMC barely has time to make it with a "little girly;" after "busting her out" he has to "leave real early." Its chorus is the most addictive on the record: "It's tricky to rock around/to rock around, that's right, on time/It's trickaayayayay!"

'My Adidas,' 'Proud to Be Black,' 'It's Tricky,' and 'Peter Piper,' (a George Clintonish allegory between their d.j., Jam Master Jay, and a string of nursery-rhyme characters), are Run-DMC at their most articulate, and when you hear the beat—I mean, THE BEAT—you probably won't give a shit about this or that or the other thing anyway, 'cause they're raising hell like no one else, and you're going down with them.

Scott Woods

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The Nils 4-song EP

Some time back, I spilled my critical load on the Nils' debut four-song EP. Needless to say, I vaulted over two record bins and mussed someone's big black haircut when I spied this paisley-covered release peering from the 'Canadian Independent' racks.

Good news? Sort of. The Nils aren't doing AOR yet, but this record lacks the bite of its older brother. Bass is mixed higher and guitar lower as the band continues their obsession with late-punk powerpop power chording. I'll still stand by this band with my hand on my heart and steel in my eyes, but it's high time they put out an album. The Nils could knot your hair at the roots if they thought about it, and that implicit promise is too much to waste.

Rick McGinnis

Pete Shelley heaven and the sea Vertigo/PolyGram

"Alas—Noble music leaves villagers indifferent, whereas a trivial song easily makes them swoon." Quoting a 4th Century B.C. Tao philosopher on the back cover of one's album is dangerous, especially when one's history includes such trivia as 'Homosapien.' But Pete has this theory. His contention is that we are fated to walk the middle ground between heaven and the sea, just as this record hovers betwixt noble and trivial.

Gone are most of the syntho-toys from 'Telephone Operator,' replaced by a wash of guitars and Stephen (O.M.D., 'Madame Butterfly') Hague's lush production. Shelley has not abandoned his search for the eternal hook, however. Briefly, he finds it on 'Waiting for Love,' 'Need A Minit,' and 'On Your Own.' On the latter, the spaghetti-western guitar hook is so tenuous that Shelley almost ends up hanging on it by his neck. Almost. But therein lies the secret of the hook. Shelley links them onto surprisingly complex arrangements; more often than not, with tuneful results.

From the Buzzcocks' scratchy love songs, through his own latent Homosapien phase, to the cosmic introspection on *heaven and the sea*, Shelley's trademark has always been the intelligent, neatly crafted pop song. Simply, if you like that genre, you'll like this record. But wait! We'll throw in some Taoist philosophy, and if you enter before tomorrow (conceptually speaking), we'll include this Chuang Tzu classic: "The leper only caresses his new-born son after he has assured himself that he is just as leprous as he." Villagers not included.

Kyle Swanson

Big Country The Seer PolyGram

Here we have a concept album without a concept. Stuart Adamson tries to weave a tale of lost loves tempered by resolve, but it sadly dissolves among the banal arrangements and instrumentation. Musically, little has changed since Big Country's debut—the same bagpipe-effect guitars, E-bows, and predictable breaks. Lyrically, Adamson is still strong, but shows little progress from *Steeltown* or *The Crossing*.

Parts of *The Seer* are quite good; their sum is not. Butler and Brzezicki are still a crack rhythm section; Adamson plays and sings solidly; the band has even abandoned plaid for jackets with shoulder pads (Glasgow Vice?). Not so fab are Robin (Sade) Millar's dull production and the generally redundant sound and feel of the record. It was new on *The Crossing*, but not now.

I wanted to get excited about *The Seer*. They tried hard, so I did too. Regrettably, effort ain't success.

Kyle Swanson

Jesus & Mary Chain Some Candy Talking WEA/Blanco Y Negro

This EP contains a version of 'Taste Of Cindy,' the controversial 'Psycho Candy' (supposedly about drugs) the controversial 'Hit' (supposedly about acid) and the title track (containing some drug references).

It may be a psychocoincidence that 'Candy Talking' simply reiterates the spiel of *Psychocandy*, the Mary Chain's orchestrally beautiful, mesmeric, seamless, whimsical, catastrophic, spongy, melodramatic, xenogenetic debut album, or it may not. Either ways, it's certainly as sweet and as disturbing (or as *totally ill* as certain cretins around here would have it) as that record. Duplication of that fine album was inevitable; just as The Velvet Underground rehashed 'Waiting For My Bus' or whatever that lingering riff was a dozen times, the Mary Chain are absorbed in a noble quest for the perfect chord. That they are victims or heroes of a dubious cult of glam junkies has little to do with the band being considerably more worthy than the Beatles, Woody Guthrie, the Rolling Stones, Steely Dan, the Beach Boys, Hank Williams, The Sex Pistols, Jesus, and The Butthole Surfers put together—the *Jesus and Mary Chain* write good songs. One particularly ectoplasmic youth informed me recently that this band "stinks." But as far as I can detect, there is no 'disgusting smell or stench' about this band, nor do their records 'emit a strong offensive odour.' At worst, they're challenging; at best they're better than sex. This record has four songs on it and is available at your local record outlet or love emporium.

Gibby Clampett

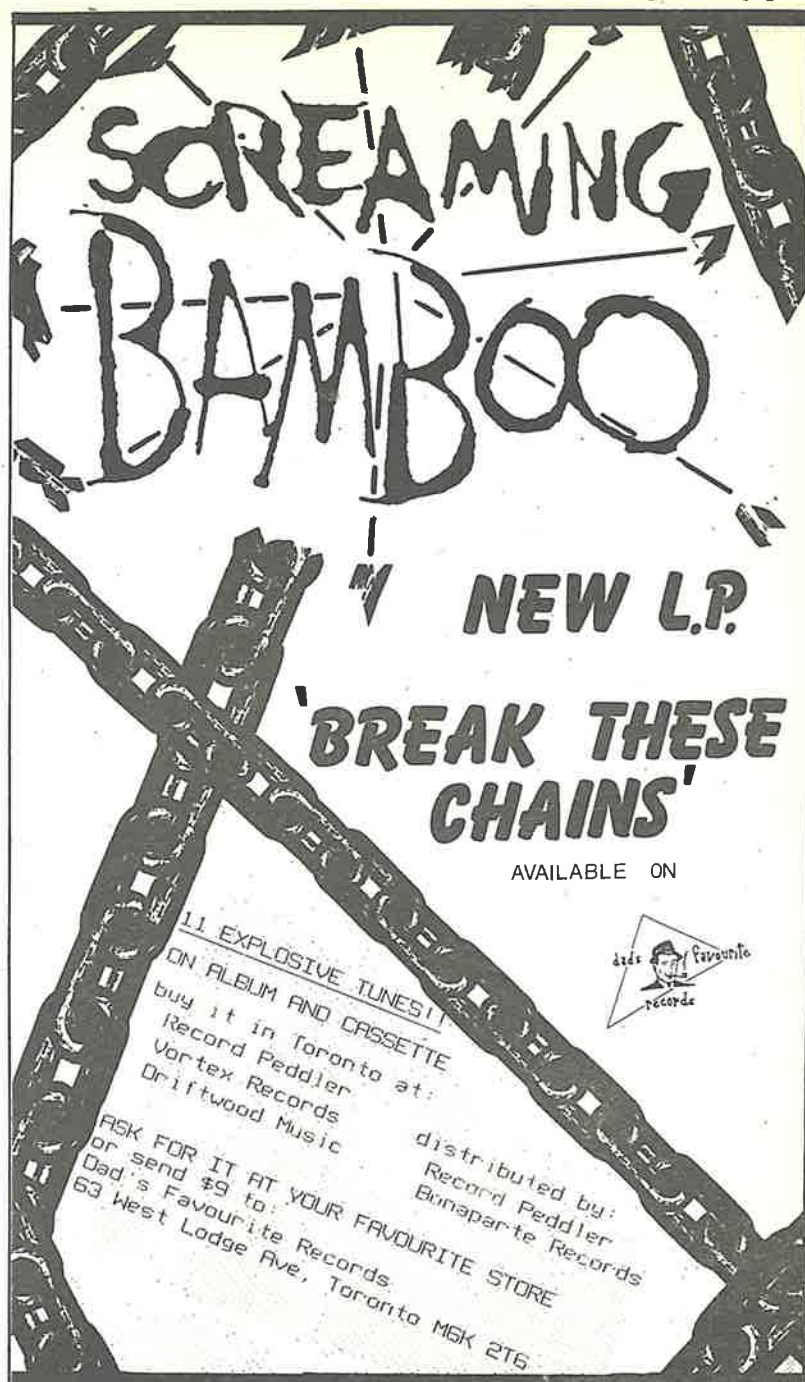
BoDeans Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams Slash/WEA

For the first half of the answer to "what is T-Bone Burnett up to these days," see Howard's review of *Peter Case*; here's the other half. T-Bone produces (and plays on) both records, and, added to his work on Costello's *King of America*, I'd have to count him, not Mitch Easter, as the Todd Rundgren Of The Year. The unfortunate sidelight to all of this is that Burnett has not put out an album of his own now in three years.

With Case and the BoDeans appearing almost simultaneously, it's difficult not to set them off against each other. Let me restrict such a comparison to one point: although Case's album houses more intelligence and promise, it's actually the BoDeans I prefer listening to. Despite its lofty title, *Love* does not offer a great deal in the way of worldly wisdom; they might just as well have called it *Girls & Guitars & Hooks & Twang*. But if you've seen the striking video for 'Fadeaway,' you'll have a good idea of how addictive this stuff can be. Although nothing quite measures up to 'that song,' 'She's a Runaway' and 'Still the Night'—both marked by a nasal whine that has to be heard to be believed—come close.

I also applaud their sense of humour. Any band which names itself after Jethro of The Beverly Hillbillies (the world's dumbest would-be brain surgeon) and then shares its name as a surname for all four members (just like you-know-who), can't possibly take themselves too seriously.

Phillip Dellio



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THE TOPP EXPERIMENT

At the most recent **Jesus & Mary Chain** show, promoter Gary Topp inflicted an hour long experiment of ear-splitting noise on an anxious audience. In an effort to duplicate the intention of the Mary Chain sound, Gary mixed 60s pop with the white noise onslaught of **Organum's In Extremis** album.

This recently released album is one of many in the new field of 'power electronics', records that sound like the static between radio stations—multiplied and amplified a thousand times!

The effect of Gary's combination was overwhelming as many of the young audience moved away from the speakers, even though they had paid to see a band with precisely the same effect! The Mary Chain's musical innovation was to combine the volume and distortion of primal rock with pop's pristine melodies, and the success of their 'concept' was the triumph of 1985.

But what of the **Organum** album, which is volume and distortion alone, without melody or beat? Why would anyone take the time to produce state-of-the-art, edited and multitracked noise? And furthermore, why would anyone buy and absorb it?

THE ART OF NOISES

The most important developments in music have been those which give meaning and signification to sound, and in using those sounds to influence and stimulate human emotion. Developments in '20th Century' music began with the incorporation of more and more dissonance in music, as serious composers reacted to the new industrialism and to the horrors of technological war.

Artists witnessing the slaughter of the first World War conceptualized the nonsense and irrationality of Dadaism and Surrealism. Italian Futurist **Luigi Russolo's** concept of **The Art Of Noises** was the theoretical foundation for a generation of music that appeared as Industrial music, 60 years later. New musicians now describe the present horror, as the problems of industrialism (pollution, underdevelopment and exploitation), imperialism (war, hunger and the arms race) and being (social and spiritual) increase in complexity with every newscast.

Their creative roots can be found in both the European avant garde and in American sound experiments dating from the late forties. The electronic narratives of France's **Pierre Henry** and West Germany's **Karlheinz Stockhausen**, as well as the intense tonal experiments of Poland's **Kristof Penderecki** and Greece's **Gregory Ligeti** sought to heal a Europe scarred by the spiritual and physical atrocities of World War Two. In the USA, **John Cage** redefined the terms *music* and *composer* to include any noise and any activity, as Americans began to open up to new post-war identities and responsibilities. The avant garde on both sides of the Atlantic began to make music that differed in theory, but was similar in volume, intensity and unpleasant 'noise'.

METAL MACHINE MUSIC

Turning on the masses to the joys of feedback and white noise was up to the rock artists, influenced by the pioneers of electronic music. **Jimi Hendrix's** impossibly distorted rock guitar was especially significant. But the breakthrough was **Lou Reed's Metal Machine Music** in 1975. This completely misunderstood album consisted of four sides of feedback from a series of amplifiers, in strict stereo separation, sixteen minutes and one second per side!

Released by RCA with a misleading picture of the *Transformer* era Reed on the cover, *Metal Machine Music* was returned to the shops by most customers—it was not quite what they expected!

But Reed had fulfilled an ambition of his since the formation of **The Velvet Underground** (who, in 1966, were doing the first intensely loud rock shows). The sleeve's specifications that listed 'drone cognizance and harmonic possibilities vis a vis **Lamont Young's Dream Music**' made the link with the post-Cage work into the effects and potentials of sound. But unlike Young's unique work with transcendent sound (subjecting his colleagues **John Cale** and **Jon Hassell** to 24-hour-a-day tone generators), Reed had created the ultimate in sonic hell! In fact, certain frequencies in *Metal Machine Music* are dangerous to people with physical brain disorders, such as epileptics and rock critics, and there is a physical and psychological disclaimer on the cover.

Listening to this popular collector's item is an experience best described by one Japanese critic: "I recieved a violent shock by this, his greatest album. It is something you can call fearful. The confused electric sound hit me like a long whip and the sound, like a tornado, broke into my head and went around my body like a wild blood." *Metal Machine Music* is a truly dangerous music paralleled only by the trumpeters at the Wall of Jericho in the swinging BCs.



noise

RAMLEH



A RETURN TO SLAVERY

Broken Flag

Chris Twomey examines a whole new world

THROBBING GRISTLE

With *Metal Machine Music* the pimple burst, and a year later art terrorists **Coum Transmissions (Throbbing Gristle)** were being banned by the British House Of Commons. **Throbbing Gristle's** brief but well documented existence established Industrial music as a valid genre and influenced a new generation of music makers. It's ultimate effect on modern rock music paralleled the punk explosion, as a raw expression from non-musicians. From the fringes of performance art, **Genesis P. Orridge**, **Cosey Fanni Tutti**, **Peter Christopherson** and **Chris Carter** released their debut album *The Second Annual Report* in a small edition with the expectation that it would be on sale for some time. But this extreme record sold out immediately and five years of crazy research into taboos, obsessions, fetishes, electronics, deviants, persuasion, manipulation, control and psychism began.

Live, TG performed 'psychic rallies' of energy and emotion unrivalled in 'rock' performances. Their volume and atmosphere was a new and unexpected environment that inspired audiences wherever they went (unfortunately, not to Canada). They were a hybrid of Western and non-Western musics; a good example was their piece *Discipline* which featured **Genesis** screaming that 'we need some discipline' around here' over **Christopherson's** electronic drones, **Carter's** martial beat box beat and **Cosey's** distorted guitar and trumpet playing. The result was a potent mix of Nuremberg-type mass hypnotism, sonic overload and the kind of harmonics used in psychic rituals by esoteric cultures around the world.

TG opened the ears of a new audience to the experimental work of other people at that time, many of whom are discussed in the indispensable *ReSearch Industrial Handbook*. Of these, **Boyd Rice (Non)** and **Graeme Revell's SPK** have released seminal albums of extreme noise. **Boyd Rice** experiments with overpowering volume and irritating loops. He considers his performances 'de-indoctrinations' by offering a block of material that listeners can structure for themselves. **Revell** specializes in charting the philosophical developments of the present time, describing what **Rice** calls the 'neurosis before necrosis', the anxiety of a living death in a technological sleep.

WHITEHOUSE

is known about the second generation of Industrialists who took the step beyond TG to create 'power electronics'. One group we do know is **Whitehouse**, whose leader **William Bennett** began creating music with precisely that aim; to create the most violent and extreme music, a music he believes we all want to hear, whether we know it or not. **Whitehouse** approaches the themes of extreme emotional behaviour like that of famous murderers, the writings of **The Marquis De Sade** and torture from the sadist's view point, with a thoroughly apolitical attitude. They created the music for themselves and their own obsessive pleasures and care little for adverse reactions from people like **Karl Blake** of **The Shock Headed Peters** who said: 'William Bennett should be locked up in a dungeon and left to rot!'

With ten albums and several live tapes released on their own Come label since 1980, **Whitehouse** are both the most notorious and obscure group in the Industrial field. Typically their music features unchanging synth frequencies with **Bennett** screaming threatening lyrics for songs such as 'Ultrasadism', 'Rape Day' or 'My Cock Is On Fire'. The music is the strongest of the genre, as the group reached technical perfection with their later albums. The frequencies used equal the weight of their lyrical content and, unfortunately, their critics cannot separate the image and performance persona from the conceptual content.

RAMLEH

Rivals of a sort to **Whitehouse** in the UK were **Ramleh**, who ran the **Broken Flag** label. Musically they employed similar synth whines and screaming, reverbed vocals but had more fluctuating wipes of sound. Their covers, however, differed from the Come label's generic approach with graphic photographs such as on their 1983 *Return To Slavery* LP, which had an autopsy into an open chest cavity of a man, and a hideous crucifixion scene on the compilation *Statement*. **Ramleh** has now become **Toll**, featured on the German compilation *Ohrenschrauben* released by the group **HNAS**. Their track 'There Must Be More Than This' has their sonic barrage increasing in intensity with a new element of Neubaten-type percussive scrapings.

ORGANUM

Back to David Jackman, whose Organum project so upsetted the Jesus & Mary Chain audience. David has had works on various compilations under his own name as well as being a one-time member of the group **New Blockaders**. This group was a noise project but with a standard 'rock' instrumentation format. For recordings like *Pulp*, Jackman achieved post-Metal Machine music of crushing density and unlistenable abrasiveness. Organum's two releases on the Belgium label LAYLAH have used allegedly organic, natural sound sources (no synths!), but their metallic screeching and grinding are equally as overwhelming as those with electronics. As Paul Lemos writes in the American Industrial magazine *Unsound* (Vol 2 no 3/4): 'Jackman creates very brittle, hard music that is at once unsettling yet ambient.'

The Organum album also contrasts the two sides as the title piece 'In Extremis' features generally higher frequencies than the 'Valley Of Worms' side. New from David Jackman and Organum is one side of an LP shared with **Nurse With Wound** on the United Dairies label

**CONTROLLED BLEEDING**

Surprisingly, the American import market has supported the experiments of British and European groups given little press coverage at home. But a third generation of industrialists has overpopulated the American scene. With many bands and record stores starting their own cassette and album labels everyone with a cassette deck is an industrialist-for-a-day. One of the best of these is **Controlled Bleeding** with two albums and several tapes, made up of Joe Papa, Chris Moriarty and the previously mentioned Paul Lemos, who is a reviewer for *Unsound* as well as *OP* magazine's inheritor *Option*.

Their most recent album is *Body Samples*, which they released themselves and was also licensed by the Berlin label Dossier. Their early tapes were mostly VU overloading intensity with no dynamics, but a typical piece on this album painfully merges ambient music with a violent barrage of high pitched frequencies like muted and sped up screams with bass and percussive throbs. This may, at first listen, sound impenetrable but it actually has many layers of composition, in much the same way as an industrial **John Zorn** piece. *Controlled Bleeding* is about the dredging of emotions like the enraged Arab on the back cover holding up the blown off leg of a comrade. Their name expresses the theme of bodily suffering due to a systemic physical and emotional torture. Their next album, *Headcrack*, will be released shortly by Nocturnal Emissions' label Sterile Records.

MAURIZIO BIANCI

One of the iconoclasts of this music is Italy's Maurizio Bianci who, like *Controlled Bleeding*, seems influenced by **Pierre Henry** in expressing a global sickness at almost a cellular level. Bianci explored what he termed the 'pre-apocalyptic times' using more musical and narrative elements of electronic music to evoke evolving emotions and environments. Slightly more subtle than *Whitehouse*, his music was nonetheless powerful, relying on drones and reverb with ritualistic vocal elements. Bianci released several albums by himself as well as having material released by both *Come* (under the name **Leibstandard MB**) and by *Broken Flag* (the double cassette *Symphony For A Genocide*), but has recently retired from artistic expression and, like **David Thomas**, has become a Jehovah's Witness.

Other 'power electronics' purveyors of note are Japan's **Merzbow**, Italy's **Giancarlo Tonuitti** and American performance artist **John Duncan** (of the infamous and grotesque **Blind Date**), not to mention the Christian Industrial band from Salt Lake City, **Blackhouse**. For more information visit the Record Peddler or contact:

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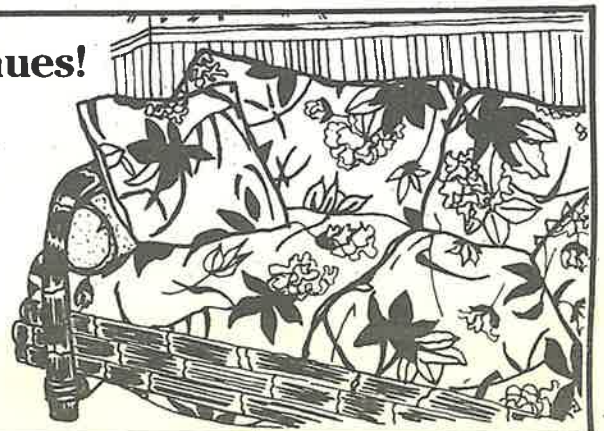
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It was a year ago I literally bumped into him while I was at the cottage. He looked great. "Jim?" I gulped. He nodded. "JIM MORRISON?" Again he slightly moved his head. I told him about the effect he had on my life and he really dug it, so I asked him if he'd play me a few songs and he said sure. We went into a garage and he diligently sang three new songs he'd just written. I'd been on my way to interview the mayor about proposed dikes for the local weekly so I had my walkman in my pocket and I taped the whole performance...Every night I'd listen to his weird, soothing songs—I kept them a secret; he was like a shaman when he was "alive" and I knew my life would never be the same if people found out. But a few nights ago, after months of deliberation and debt, I decided to make 1,000 tapes and sell them discreetly to the big chains. I was just starting the process of duplication when I realized I'd pressed RECORD on the master machine instead of the duplicating machine. Instantly I reached for the stop button, but at the same time my father burst into the room, and I flinched and pushed FAST FORWARD instead, which always fucks up the tape. As the grotesque sound of audio tape being ripped and mangled filled my ears, dad yelled, "Son, where did you get this?"

He found my copy of Nerve.

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Lee's Palace
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The Paddock
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- Tuesday 5**
PHANTOMS: Clintons til Wed
BETTY FORD CLINIC: Pinetree til Wed
PRIDE: Hotel Isabella
STRANGER: Larry's
TONY SPRINGER BAND: ElMocambo downstairs til the 10th
SYLUM: Horseshoe
PARACHUTE CLUB: Forum til Wed
PAUL JAMES: Albert's Hall til Sat
MELODY RANCH: Grossman's til Wed
L'ETRANGER: Bamboo
SECOND CHANCE: Network til the 13th
MALCOLM BURN, EUTHANASIA,
JOHNNY ANALOG: Lee's
Cabana Cafe- 90 DEGREES: Cabana
- Wednesday 6**
GARBAGEMEN: Cameron
DIREKTIVE 17: Bamboo
DAYGLO ABORTIONS, WAS IST LOS
SCOTT B. SUDDEN PUPPIES: R.P.M.
SHOCK CANDY: Larry's
PRETTY PERSUASION, THE CHESHYRES
TEA FOR TEN: Lee's
EXCURSION w/ THE CUSTOMERS: Isabella
MY PAL HOAGY, STOP: Cabana
THE FALLEN ETHNOCENTRIC
BUBBLE HEADS: Lee's til Fri
SICK MEN OF EUROPE: RnR Heaven
L'ETRANGER: Horseshoe
- Thursday 7**
WHITENOISE: Rivoli
SZELESCK & MAVILL: ElMocambo
MELODY RANCH: Clintons til Sat
KHROMA KEY/SYLUM: Larry's
BIG CHILL: Pinetree til Sat
SEATBELTS FOR DOGS: Cameron
DEAD HEROES: Isabella til Fri
BOP TOTEM: Isabella (lower)
GAMMA GAMMA: Diamond
CHAIN OF FUN, LIVINGROOM: Lee's
THE FALLEN ETHNOCENTRIC
BUBBLE HEADS: Lee's Upstairs
5 AFTER 4: Horseshoe
RED LETTER: RnR Heaven
BRUCE COCKBURN: Kingswood
HERATIX, ZUZU PETALS: Cabana
MAGIC REVOLUTION: Bamboo
CEEDEES: Grossman's til Sat
WEA Records Night: Copa
- Friday 8**
TIBET: Lee's
BRATTY (7pm): Cameron
ABSOLUTE WHORES: Isabella (lower)
THE GROUND: Lee's Upstairs
FORGOTTEN REBELS: Larry's
METALLICA, KEAL: Concert Hall
Love Scenes: Music Gallery
ROCKABILLY ALLSTARS: Horseshoe
LEROY SIBBLES: Bamboo til Sat
POPULAR FRONT: ElMocambo
BAKKA PO: Cameron
BLEECKER ST.: Rivoli
BLUSHING BRIDES: RnR Heaven til Sat
THE GOOD THINGS: Cabana
- Saturday 9**
VIEW MASTERS: Cabana
PAUL JAMES: Albert's Hall
THE PHANTOMS, HUNGRY GLASS: Lee's
I.T., THE BLOW: Lee's Upstairs
EDDIE BLIGH: Cameron
BLUE RODEO: ElMocambo
SHADOWY MEN...: Rivoli
BITS OF KIDS: Larry's
BLAIR MARTIN GROUP: Isabella
GEORGE HIGTON: Isabella (lower)
LEROY SIBBLES: Bamboo
ROCKABILLY ALLSTARS: Horseshoe
- Sunday 10**
MIKE MACDONALD: Grossman's
THE RED ROCKETS (2-6pm),
Talent Showcase: Lee's
DOUG & THE SLUGS: Forum til Mon
The Bicycle Thief: Rivoli
HONEY NOVICK: Music Gallery
- Monday 11**
MIGHTY JOE YOUNG:
Albert's Hall til Sat
ICEHOUSE: Copa
MIDNIGHT SHIFT: Larry's
SEVEN SISTERS: Bamboo til Tues
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOO'S:
Clintons til Wed
DANNY MARKS: Pinetree til Wed
ALEC FRASER: Grossman's til Wed
TOO MUCH TOO SOON: Isabella til Wed
PSYCHIC TV: Diamond
SIGHT SOUND & RHYTHM, VERTIGO
BLUE ROCKETS: Lee's
ELECTRIC FIRE BROTHERS: Horseshoe til Wed
- Tuesday 12**
PSYCHEDELIC FURS, SIMPLY RED
BLOW MONKEYS: CNE Grandstand
SOUL ASYLUM, SLOW: R.P.M.
Wedge of Night, ONE OF ONE: Lee's
EUGENE RIPPER: Cabana
INB: Larry's
HUMAN MACHINE PARTS: Cameron
SEVEN SISTERS: Bamboo
JATO: Diamond

WHAT'S SHAKIN...

Wednesday 13

STEVIE NICKS, PETER FRAMPTON: CNE Grandstand
I.U.C., CRAZY FELIX: Cabana
GARBAGEMEN: Cameron
CHANGING FACES: Horseshoe
NEON ROME, NO LIFE: R.P.M.
VIRGIN STEAL: RnR Heaven
POETRY SWEATSHOP: Rivoli
PERFECT WORLD: Bamboo
CALLING RAIN, THE SHADOW KNOWS
NOSMO KING JR.: Lee's
STRUTTER: Larry's
THACKWAY & WICKHAM: Isabella

Thursday 14

LOVELESS: Lee's
PRIDE: Lee's Upstairs
LIBERTY SILVER: Network til Sat
TEA FOR 10, LAUGHING APPLES,
BOP TOTEM: Cabana
WILLY WILLIAMS &
SOUND DIMENSION: Bamboo til Sat
ENDLESS SUMMER: RnR Heaven
DAVID SCURR & TIM HOWE: Music Gallery
TRUDY ARTMAN: Horseshoe
CARTWRIGHT: Cameron
G.P. & THE MARAUDERS: Diamond
KIDS IN THE HALL: Rivoli
THE WIND UP BAND: Grossman's til Sat
TONY BIRD: Isabella til Sat
JOHNNY TRASH: Isabella (lower)
CBS Records Night: Copa
DANNY MARKS: Clintons til Sat
THE BUZZ: Pinetree til Sat
HOAX: Larry's

Friday 15

CASBY AWARDS: Kingswood
BRATTY (7pm): Cameron
MALCOLM BURN BAND: Cameron
Speaking in the Language
of Art & Music: Music Gallery
HORSE OPERA, PARTS FOUND IN SEA: Cabana
BLUE RODEO: Horseshoe
FRANKIE & THE VIPERS: EIMocambo
METAL MAYHEM: Larry's
MONDO COMBO: Lee's
RIVER ST. BAND: RnR Heaven
THE WEST: Lee's Upstairs
LIVING ROOM: Rivoli
CEEDEES: Isabella (lower) til Sat

Saturday 16

THE LAWN, 3RD MAN IN: Cabana
BUNCHOFFUCKINGGOOFS: Cameron
THE JITTERS: RnR Heaven
PARTS FOUND IN SEA, GROOVY RELIGION,
BORO GROOVE: Larry's
THE PROOF: Horseshoe
JOHNNIE LOVESIN: CNE Rockstop
DUNDRELLS, IKONS, SUN ZOOM SPARK: Lee's
THE THROBS: Lee's Upstairs
PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, STRANGER
THAN FICTION: Rivoli
TULA: EIMocambo
THE BUZZ: Pinetree
DANNY MARKS: Clintons
CEEDEES: Isabella (lower)
TONY BIRD: Isabella
MIGHTY JOE YOUNG: Albert's Hall

Sunday 17

BILL COSBY: CNE Grandstand
Umberto (De Sica): Rivoli
Talent Showcase: Lee's
JAMES DOOLIN & THE JAGUARS: Grossman's

Monday 18

WHITENOISE: Bamboo
SAINTS & SINNERS, DAVID OWEN:
Albert's Hall til Sat
PHLASH BAK BLUE: Isabella til Wed
DANCING COUNTS: Larry's
Blues Jam: Pinetree
ACE BOY: Horseshoe til Wed
JOANNE MACKELL: Cameron
RON HEADLAND BLUES BAND: Clintons
SWEDISH FISH, THE SADDLE TRAMPS,
ZEBRA PEOPLE: Lee's

Tuesday 19

STAN RIDGWAY: R.P.M.
Cabana Cafe w/STEVEN HAFLIDSON: Cabana
KURT SWINGHAMMER: Music Gallery
Island Record Night: Copa
JAZZPOEMS, POETRY NOW: Rivoli
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOOOS: Pinetree til Sat
FUNKY PRESIDENTS: Bamboo til Thurs
VEKTOR: Cameron
J.A. CONNECTIONS, DANCING COUNTS,
CENTRAL FIRE: Lee's
THE WEST: Larry's

Wednesday 20

I.T., BROKEN WINDOWS, WEATHER MEN:
Cabana
MIDDLEBROOK & THE WORKS: Isabella til Fri
AL PERRY & THE CATTLE, TULPA
RUMBLETONES, CHANGING FACES: R.P.M.
HITSQUAD: Larry's
PAT BETTY: Rivoli
HOLLOWMEN: Horseshoe
THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS: Diamond
SEX ARTISTS, REDLIFE, THE LAWN: Lee's
FUNKY PRESIDENTS: Bamboo
GARBAGEMEN: Cameron
MICK TAYLOR: RnR Heaven

Thursday 21

MICKEY MANDRIX: Larry's
Capitol Records Night: Copa
Acoustic Underground w/EUGENE RIPPER: Rivoli
MONDO COMBO: Clintons til Sat
RON LASALLE & RUMBLE SEED: RnR Heaven
CHAIN OF FUN, LIVING ROOM: Cabana
THE JACK DEKEYSER BAND,
THE DEAD HEROES: Diamond
DAVID SEREDA: Horseshoe
JOHNNY ANALOG: Isabella lower
ROCK STEADY: Lee's
COMPANY TOWN: Cameron
BREEDING GROUND: Big Bop
SATELLITES: Bamboo til Sat

Friday 22

DIRTY WHITE BOYS: RnR Heaven til Sat
PARKDALE ROCKIN HOUSE PARTY: Larry's
SUDDEN PUPPIES, VAROSHI FAME: Rivoli
JACK DEKEYSER BAND: Isabella
CRAZY FELIX: Isabella lower til Sat
CHANGE OF HEART, SCOTT B.,
THE REMAINS: Lee's
TABULA RASA: Lee's Upstairs
BRATTY (7pm): Cameron
SKYNN TYTE: Cameron
PRETTY PERSUASION, CHESHYRES: Cabana
PAUL JAMES: Horseshoe til Sat

Saturday 23

3 BLUE EYES: Rivoli
NEON ROME: Larry's
PHANTOMS: Isabella
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOOOS: Pinetree
MONDO COMBO: Clintons
EURYTHMICS: Kingswood
BLAIR MARTIN: Lee's
CENTURY'S END, COMPANY TOWN: Lee's Upstairs
PARTS FOUND IN SEA: Cameron
DUNDRELLS, THE SOURCE: Cabana
SATELLITES: Bamboo
PAUL JAMES: Horseshoe
SAINTS & SINNERS/DAVID OWEN:
Albert's Hall

Sunday 24

Talent Showcase: Lee's

Monday 25

EXILE: Larry's
JOHNNIE LOVESIN: Clintons til Wed
BLEECKER ST. BAND: Isabella til Wed
Fred's Bicycle Repair Shop: Rivoli
BAMBI: Diamond
JOANNE MACKELL: Cameron
Blues Jam: Pinetree
PSYCHE: Lee's
CHRIS CAITLIN: Grossman's til Wed
JAMES DOOLIN: Horseshoe til Wed
JEFF HEALEY: Albert's Hall til Sat
BRATTY: Bamboo

Tuesday 26

FIRE, BURIED ALIVE IN THE BLUES,
CCR REVIVAL, THE OTHER ONE: Copa
THE FEELIES, WILD STARES, THE LAWN: R.P.M.
ARRON DAVIS & HOLLY COLE: Bamboo
TABORAH JOHNSON: Diamond
ELTON JOHN: CNE Grandstand
HAWK EYE: Network til Sat
Cabana Cafe- ANDREW CASH: Cabana
A Wedge Of Night, QUATRANE,
THE JAZZ MONGERS: Lee's
BLUE ANIMAL PARANOIA: Larry's

Wednesday 27

RED ALERT: Horseshoe
JACK DEKEYSER BAND: Isabella til Sat
NATIONAL VELVET, CITYCHILD,
SPANNERS IN THE WORKS: Lee's
HUNGRY GLASS, BLUE DELTA: Cabana
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOOOS: Cameron til Sat
FM w/NASH THE SLASH: Copa
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDRIES: Rivoli
HUEY LEWIS: CNE Grandstand
THE BULLETS: Larry's
BLUE RODEO: Bamboo

Thursday 28

SUFFER MACHINE: Lee's
U.I.C., PURPLE TOADS: Cabana
BODEANS: R.P.M.
TRO BAND: Bamboo
PHANTOMS: Grossman's til Sat
ROBERT PRIEST: Horseshoe
PEGASUS: RnR Heaven
PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: Larry's
JOHNNIE TRASH: Isabella Lower
CIRCA, WORD OF MOUTH BAND: Rivoli
Polygram Records Night: Copa
EDDIE B: Pinetree
BIG CHILL: Clintons til Sat
Wrestling—Hulkamania: CNE Grandstand

Friday 29

METAL MELTDOWN II: Larry's
L'ETRANGER: Horseshoe til Sat
GAMMA GAMMA: Lee's
GEORGE HIGTON & THE HAUNTED MEN: Rivoli
JA CUTTA: Bamboo til Sat
VACATION IN DRESDEN, LIVING IN FRANCE:
Cabana
THE CARTWRIGHTS: Isabella Lower til Sat
BRATTY (7pm): Cameron
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOOOS: Cameron

Clubs

ALBERT'S HALL—481 BLOOR ST. W. 964-2242
BAMBOO—312 QUEEN ST. W. 593-5771
BRIDGE—507 BLOOR ST. W. 921-1158
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DIAMOND—410 SHERBOURNE ST. 927-9010
EL MOCAMBO—464 SPADINA 961-8991
GEORGE'S—290 DUNDAS ST. E. 923-9887
GROSSMAN'S—379 SPADINA 977-7000
HORSESHOE—368 QUEEN ST. W. 598-4753
ISABELLA—556 SHERBOURNE ST. 921-4167
LEE'S PALACE—529 BLOOR ST.W. 532-7383
MUSIC GALLERY—1087 QUEEN ST. 534-6311
PADDOCK—178 BATHURST ST W. 364-2536
PINETREE—650 QUEEN ST. W. 364-5258
RIVOLI—334 QUEEN ST. W. 596-1908
RPM—132 QUEEN'S QUAY E. 869-1462

Saturday 30


FIFTH COLUMN, THE LAWN, 3RD MAN IN,
THE IKONS, THOUSAND DOLLAR WEDDING:
Lee's
REDLIFE: Lee's
MONDO COMBO, BLEECKER ST.: RnR Heaven
FACULTY X, SUFFER MACHINE: Cabana
L'ETRANGER: Horseshoe
TROUBLE BOYS, RUMBLETONES: Larry's
JACK DEKEYSER BAND: Isabella
HANDSOME NEDS: Cameron
JEFF HEALEY: Albert's Hall

Sunday 31

JUDAS PRIEST, KROKUS: CNE Grandstand
KENDALL WALL BAND: Grossman's
Talent Showcase: Lee's

BRATTY

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Honorary Hipster

"Toronto's always had good bands, but there's never been a good alternative label that could distribute well, short of bands doing it themselves."

So Bryan Taylor, ex-hardcore god and employee of the hippest record store in Canada, decided to do something about that situation. Along with Peter McDonald, another Record Peddler employee, he convinced Ben Hoffman (owner of both Fringe and the Peddler) to take on a project called Diabolic Force.

Here's the deal: the Force licences produced tapes and packaging they prepare themselves for release by Fringe (on a par with Canadian labels MoDaMu, Zulu, Nettwerk and Psyche Industry in terms of using apparent respectability and relative stability to release wildly strange records); Fringe is saved the task of having to frequent metal circuses to recruit talented young pop musicians, Bryan and Peter get to be record company bosses and Heavy Metal Gurus, and the world is blessed with the recorded works of Sacrifice and Slaughter...with more hit platters on their way down the chute as we speak.

Let's trace Bryan's route from relative baldness to a rich and fulfilling life as a HM Guru.

"It just happened. Punk rock was getting tedious and the heavy metal that was being played around then wasn't heavy metal as I knew it, like the Venom *Black Metal* album. I just liked this new kind of metal much better, and now I go all the way."

What he's talking about is the ground breaking merger of hardcore punk and heavy metal; previously considered theoretically impossible but now the standard to which all metal must aspire. Is there a new bond between Punks and Metal heads?

"In 1980 there were people listening to Iron Maiden who would never listen to punk, but it's incredible how many of the metal people now listen to punk. One good thing about the scene now, that metal-hardcore thing, is that no one is really into politics and shit like that at all anymore. It really doesn't matter, so why bother?

What topics are left?

"Everything else."

Is the music apolitical by design?

"Definitely. That doesn't mean it doesn't say anything. Sometimes these bands come up with some good ideas..."

I can imagine.

Bryan Taylor's 'Diabolic Force'

Ever since Day One of the darned old punk rock explosion, the gummies, pencil-necked geeks, roll-deoderant heads and longhaired louts that populate the 'underground' universe have berated their rock gods for succumbing to the lure of the lucre obtained from record companies. It happens, and with reason. Brian has mixed feelings about bands who sell the remains of their souls to major record companies, from both a fan's standpoint and that of a dubious businessman.

"It certainly fucks bands up. Husker Du have certainly fuckin' died since they got signed to WEA. But just because a metal band's signed to Banzai (distributed by PolyGram) doesn't mean shit. They're not selling untold tens of thousands of records, they're selling two or three thousand. There's no noticable difference being signed to Banzai and being signed to Diabolic Force/Fringe, but with us your record gets sent to the right stations and magazines in this area of music. There are definite advantages to being signed to a smaller label. It's hard to sell a lot of anything in Canada, especially with Diabolic Force—we're not interested in Easy Listening music..."

Indeed. They're selling metal. Solid metal. Bone crunching, unrelenting, sodomizing, molten metal.

"Few of them are as terrifying as they seem to be."

That's reassuring!

Although Bryan partially agrees with my contention that all Heavy Metal, Speed Metal and Liquid Metal is based on an ethic of steadfast duplication, he insists that trailblazers like Metallica and Slayer will be seen in years to come as innovators on par with John Cage, John Lennon, John Rotten and Elton John.



Bryan Taylor —Chris Buck

Believe it or not, there are some cretinous creatures with corruption on their minds who seek to taint the stirring reputation of heavy metal by releasing *fake metal*!!! Bryan warns to beware of the despicable frauds; "bullshit bubblegum death metal" like Piledriver and Exorcist.

"I think a lot of people get fooled into buying that stuff, and I think it sucks. It starts getting into the whole thing from the inside and making it, like, *foul*. Guys like Sacrifice and Slaughter are *into it*, they mean what they play and that's the music they listen to."

Sacrifice, Slaughter, Razor, Running Wild, Celtic Frost, Onslaught, Kreator, Destruction, Poison Idea, Dr. Know, Corrosion Of Conformity. This is the music Brian enjoys, passing the time feeding bits of hot-dogs to his pet pihrana (no shit) or sacrificing virgins on the ping pong table which dominates his dungeon in a remote corner of Parkdale.

All the time I've known him, he's always liked the hardest, newest, stupidest music around. His collection of rare demos and cassettes—many of them recorded by him—spans five years of being involved with local hard rock music, from his early days as singer for Toronto's best punk band Youth Youth (one of the first Fringe bands) to his more recent indoctrination as HM Guru. One of the best independent tape compilations to emerge from this city was Brian's *T.O. Hardcore '84* cassette, which he compiled and produced himself at Accusonic studio.

"I like working in the studio a lot," he states, as we take a break from a particularly absorbing sequence of Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains The Same* video, and smoke another bowl of alfalfa seeds and ground chicken bones. "That's where you get to make everything sound like it should. I'm sure the bands are confident that I know what kind of sound is...necessary."

Essentially, he's looking for a sound that's effective. Questions you ask yourself when producing *Speed Metal*: Does the bass cause highway accidents? Are the drums capable of mass genocide? Does the guitar liquify the brains of an entire planet? Can the singer sing? No? Perfect formula.

"My big thing has been just to get bands into the studio. If they were left on their own they'd never do it. A lot of the early hardcore bands, like Direct Action, I just recorded them 'cos I wanted to hear it for myself. I wasn't too concerned with selling it, I just wanted my own copy. There's bands around I know will just fizzle out and die if they don't do anything. They just need that push to get them going. Although some bands are quite happy with their basement."

So Brian, put that double edged axe down, and tell me about being a HM Guru.

"I try and know as much as possible about anything that interests me, and I just happen to be very interested in this obnoxious, irritating music."

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The Garys PRESENT...

LETTERCE

A letter of observation to the Editors:

I believe it was Oscar Wilde who once said

"I sometimes think that God in creating Man, somewhat overestimated His ability."

In regards to the SIX PACK review in the July issue of *Nerve*; I'd like to say that I sometimes think that writers, in contributing to pseudo-artistic, self indulgent newspapers, sometimes overestimate the value of their opinion.

It's funny how one can suffer dilussions of intelligence looking at life through the bottom of a beer bottle.

Sincerely, Evan Turner

(Oh yeah?? Oh yeah?? I know you are, but what am I?? —PD)

Helen Lee's July reveiw of the Depeche Mode concert was the snobbiest pelce of crap I have ever read. Do you really think you can claim exclusive rights to DM just because you don't use L'Oreal Mousse? You must be pretty familiar with it yourself to know what it smells like on other people. I didn't notice it, personally. Well, if you want them, you can have them. I'd choose Test Dept. over them any day.

Sincerely, "Old Simple Minds" fan
ROW TT, 505

(I must say, I'm glad to see that that fab Scottish band has finally owned up and changed their name to the more appropriate Old Simple Minds. —Ed.)

In the July edition of *Nerve*, neatly nestled in a space nearly one inch deep and spreading the full width of the page was the comment "The city of Hamilton took the month off." The comment was authored by Mr. B.F. Mowat. For him to make such an unfair and underhanded report is disgusting and a complete betrayal of the people in the city with a real commitment to alternative music.

Mr. B.F. Mowat has done nothing via this report to encourage a thoughtful discussion regarding the alternative music scene in Hamilton. There is a solid, devoted group of musicians, individuals and businesses in Hamilton who have been struggling to bring alternative music to the forefront. They have invested time, money and considerable creative effort in its step by painful step evolution. Mr. B.F. Mowat has betrayed each and every one by his idle, callous and thoughtless condescension.

Mr. B.F. Mowat is supposed to be a music critic. By itself, that is unquestioned. However, when B.F. Mowat deliberately betrays the positive efforts of the real contributors in the city he sets himself up as a self-proclaimed demi-god with remarkably clay feet.

If he is not happy or feels upset that he does not have a music community worthy of his attention he may do everyone a favor by either adjusting his sights towards reality and helping the alternative music scene develop or he can step aside and let alone the individuals and businesses in Hamilton who are capable of doing something constructive. When it has grown to a standard Mr. B.F. Mowat considers of sufficient size to merit his attention, he can reappear in all his pompous splendor.

Barry Sandland

(Uh, hold on a second, Barry. There's too much talk of 'painful' 'struggling' 'effort' in this letter. This is a rock 'n roll paper, not a fucking charity telethon. Bruce 'Elvis Would've Joined The Forgotten Rebels If He Hadn't Have Died' Mowat is the music director of Hamilton's best and wildest radio station, not to mention the author of consistently over-enthusiastic verbiage championing the city's alternative rock. I think he's entitled to his little jokes. —Ed.)

Hi! I've been reading your paper for about a year now (whenever we can get hold of a copy out here) and I really enjoy it. Since the NME has decided that Socialism & the Red Wedge is more important to cover than music, I find your paper the best for "new" music news.

The purpose of this little note is to inform you that we are opening Saskatoon's only Live alternative nightclub on August 1. It's a great little place (capacity 180) called Cafe a Go-Go and we are going to do everything possible to make it work.

Our line up for the next few weeks includes the Killer Clowns, Change of Heart, local bands Active Joy (who have a record from early this year) and IBS (a high energy band whose debut album will be out any day). Jerry Jerry, Zi from Minneapolis and True Believers. If you know of any Toronto or area bands who are coming out this way that want a gig, tell them to give me a call. We're very easy to work with and want to help any band that wants the chance. Keep up the good work & looking forward to hearing from you.

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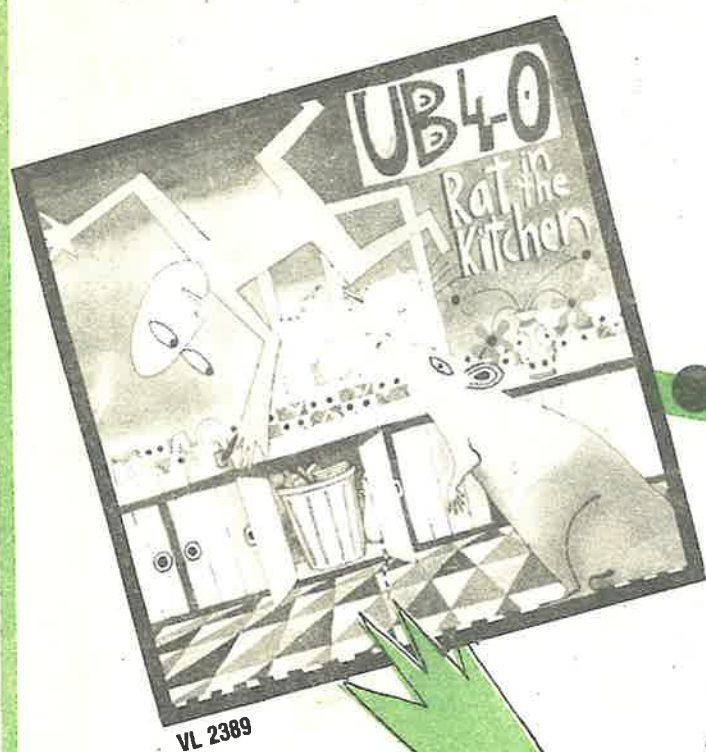
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